NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

FEAR FACTORS IN: POLITICAL RHETORIC, THREAT INFLATION, AND THE NARRATIVE OF SEPTEMBER 11

by

Lorna Y. Atmore

December 2014

Thesis Advisor: Fathali Moghaddam
Second Reader: David Brannan

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704–0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	December 2014	Master's Thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
FEAR FACTORS IN: POLITICAL RHETORIC, THREAT INFLATION, AND THE NARRATIVE OF SEPTEMBER 11

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S) Lorna Y. Atmore

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93943-5000

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
N/A

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE
A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon transformed the way the nation views homeland security and terrorism. It changed the priorities of the nation. The current frame of reference on terrorism, national security, and fear of future attacks were informed by political remarks and speeches made in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Political rhetoric that defined the terrorist attacks as acts of war laid the foundation for a period of public insecurity and vulnerability to the threat of terrorism in the homeland and provided justifications for counterterrorism legislation that impinged individual freedoms and civil rights.

The purpose of this research is to analyze political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, to determine whether political rhetoric contributed to threat inflation, public fear, and misperception of the security threats faced by the American public. An examination of the divergent scholarly perspectives on the role of political rhetoric on public perception, emotion, and reaction is performed to uncover mechanisms that impacted critical assessment, minimized debate of policy alternatives, and fostered public fear. The study exposes the characteristics of political rhetoric and the discursive devices employed in response to the terrorist attacks, which influenced public threat perception and fear. It argues that the rhetorical choices, which emphasized fear, were part of the mechanics for threat inflation seen in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

14. SUBJECT TERMS	15. NUMBER OF PAGES
political rhetoric, threat inflation, fear, culture of fear, politics of fear, positioning theory, securitization theory, social identity theory, constructivism, discourse analysis	141
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU

NSN 7540–01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2–89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239–18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

FEAR FACTORS IN: POLITICAL RHETORIC, THREAT INFLATION, AND THE NARRATIVE OF SEPTEMBER 11

Lorna Y. Atmore
Deputy Inspector, Nassau County Police Department, Mineola, New York
B.A., City University of New York, 2001

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2014**

Author: Lorna Y. Atmore

Approved by: Fathali Moghaddam
Thesis Advisor

David Brannan
Second Reader

Mohammed Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon transformed the way the nation views homeland security and terrorism. It changed the priorities of the nation. The current frame of reference on terrorism, national security, and fear of future attacks were informed by political remarks and speeches made in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Political rhetoric that defined the terrorist attacks as acts of war laid the foundation for a period of public insecurity and vulnerability to the threat of terrorism in the homeland and provided justifications for counterterrorism legislation that impinged individual freedoms and civil rights.

The purpose of this research is to analyze political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, to determine whether political rhetoric contributed to threat inflation, public fear, and misperception of the security threats faced by the American public. An examination of the divergent scholarly perspectives on the role of political rhetoric on public perception, emotion, and reaction is performed to uncover mechanisms that impacted critical assessment, minimized debate of policy alternatives, and fostered public fear. The study exposes the characteristics of political rhetoric and the discursive devices employed in response to the terrorist attacks, which influenced public threat perception and fear. It argues that the rhetorical choices, which emphasized fear, were part of the mechanics for threat inflation seen in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF TABLES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Copenhagen School
DD	Detective Division
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FISA	Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act
GWOT	Global War on Terror
ICC	International Criminal Court
JTTF	Joint Terrorism Task Force
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NCPD	Nassau County Police Department
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSS	National Security Strategy
OHS	Office of Homeland Security
PD	primary documents
PT	positioning theory
SBE	social, behavioral and economic
SD	secondary documents
SIT	social identity theory
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
WMD	weapons of mass destruction
WOT	War on Terror
WTC	World Trade Center

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fear is a normal human response to uncertainty and crisis. During times of crisis, political leaders may utilize the power of public fear to quell dissent and garner support for preferred policy agenda. These rhetorical choices construct meaning and social reality for the nation. When fear factors into the assessment process, threat inflation and misperceptions happen. An enduring state of fear can erode the public's sense of security, as well as waste resources and manpower.[1] An exploration of the relationship between political rhetoric, threat inflation, and public fear post-September 11, and the rhetorical mechanisms that encourage a culture of fear can assist in finding ways to counter threat and public misperceptions.

This thesis examined the discursive techniques of political leaders in response to the September 11, 2001, hereafter referred to as September 11 terror attacks, and the influence on public perception of the security threat. In a period viewed as a novel threat environment, the analysis looked at the threat response by presidential administration leaders in the form of political rhetoric to explain the threats faced due to terrorism. The process by which leaders' strategic narrative constructed meaning for the nation, influenced public perception, and inflated the threat was studied. This thesis explored how the public came to view terrorism against the United States (U.S.) homeland as an existential threat and addressed the question of whether the political rhetoric surrounding terrorism cultivated fear and induced public consent on security initiatives and counterterrorism policy. Specifically, the study examined rhetoric that disseminated the September 11 narrative, techniques employed to unify the nation, deter dissent, and secure consent for counterterrorism policy.

Discourse analysis looks at the structure of text and the methods of constructing meaning through language within a cultural context. Meaning constructed through text, which refers to written, spoken, or symbolic words that can be conveyed in narratives that

[1] Vincent E. Henry, "The Need for a Coordinated and Strategic Local Police Approach to Terrorism: A Practitioner's Perspective," in *Examining Political Violence: Studies of Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Internal War,* ed. David Lowe, Austin T. Turk, and Dilip K. Da (United Kingdom: CRC Press, 2013).

contribute to broader social and cultural understanding. In this sense, discourse is social action and constructs social reality. The way people make sense of the world is through the use of language.

The qualitative research lenses of positioning theory and securitization theory with the constructivist view on reality was employed to analyze the earliest remarks and speeches by the administration in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. The purpose in analyzing the political rhetoric surrounding September 11 was to reveal how language was used to shape reality. Positioning analysis brings to light the cognitive processes by which rights and duties are defined and distributed among the relevant population. Securitization theory maintains that security issues are socially constructed through the utterance of actors who seek to move an issue beyond the realm of normal politics. The assertion that security is a social construct fits nicely with the properties of speech acts in positioning theory. Positioning and securitization analysis consider the relevant actors and illocutionary force of speech acts to reveal patterns of reasoning in human interactions.[2] Bringing together positioning and securitization frameworks to investigate *what* and *how* issues are securitized provided a robust approach to studying the influence of discourse in threat perception and public fear.

The research showed that following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the strategic construction of elite rhetoric shaped public opinion and the characteristics of the American identity. The narrative of September 11 heightened nationalistic feelings and suppressed oppositional debate in response to the attacks. The rhetoric employed social identity theory (SIT) tenets that fostered group cohesion, unified diverse populations, and dictated acceptable public response and behaviors. These techniques were crucial in gaining support for aggressive leadership and the administration's preferred agenda.[3] The rhetoric of the administration discursively positioned the public to rally-round-the-flag in support of the president and progressed to employ the strategy of binary opposition, us

[2] Rom Harré et al., "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory," *Theory & Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2009): 5.

[3] Heinz Steinert, "The Indispensable Metaphor of War: On Populist Politics and the Contradictions of the State's Monopoly of Force," *Theoretical Criminology* 7, no. 3 (2003): 266.

versus them, rhetoric. The analysis of the selected speech acts unpacks the methods that informed political rhetoric and produced the narrative of September 11.

The responsibility for crisis leadership on the national level remains the province of political elites. However, the American public is the primary stakeholder. This examination of the post-September 11 rhetoric concludes with recommendations for alternate discursive approaches to future terrorism and homeland security concerns. These recommendations encourage an open exchange of information on national security issues to alleviate uncertainty and fear in the public and return security to the realm of normal politics.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing the acknowledgements should be simple after the process of completing my thesis and thriving in this challenging master's program. Yet, the written words do not fully or properly convey the sentiment that lies behind them—heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.

Family and loved ones played an important part in my success by providing support, encouragement, and love; each in their own unique way. My son, Aaquil (Kyle), with his not-so-gentle nudges and unwavering belief in my abilities was my personal champion. My nieces, Sharina and Ania, provided research assistance and keen proofreading in support of my academic pursuit. My sister, Cheryl, allowed me to renege on my promised assistance with the little ones (Allore and Amonie) so I could spend "free" time in the world of academia, and my sister, Donna, somehow convinced me to take two much-needed vacations during the program. Lastly, my wonderful parents, Robert and Barbara, who provided refuge from the storm and the unconditional love only parents can. They reminded me you can always go home and I certainly did. Thank you and I love you all.

I want to acknowledge the Nassau County Police Department for providing the extraordinary opportunity for me to attend the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). I thank Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) NPS alumni, Christopher Cleary, for encouraging me to apply to the program, and Kevin Power, for the impromptu conversations and considerable support.

Working in the Office of the Chief of Detectives during the program, I was surrounded by the most amazingly supportive and inquisitive people, led by true connoisseurs of knowledge, Rick Capece, Marianne Thompson, and James Bartscherer. I thank each of you and the rest of my detective family for making my time in the detective division (DD) a positive and unforgettable experience.

I want to express my gratitude to all those who were instrumental in making this thesis a reality. I thank my advisors, Dr. Fathali Moghaddam and Dr. David Brannan, for

their time and support during this process. Dave provided encouragement and tools for overcoming writer's block and reducing occasional angst. Ali's infinite patience, sage advice, and prompt feedback made this a productive and intellectually stimulating journey. The staff and faculty at the NPS program are truly amazing and dedicated professionals who made this undertaking—that was at times fun, more often challenging, but always worthwhile—remarkable and transforming.

My NPS venture was so much more rewarding than I anticipated due in large part to the enthusiasm and love of learning shared by the members of cohort 1205/1206. The curriculum tested our critical thinking, nurtured our curiosity, and sent many of us down rabbit holes that stimulated new inquires and avenues of exploration. It was infectious and I am honored to have been a member of the cohort Dr. Chris Bellavita aptly described as "extraordinary." It was a real pleasure sharing this journey with you all.

Finally, my thesis is dedicated in memory of my baby sister, Robin Merinda Atmore-Williams, and my beloved nephew, Justin Robert Harold Dolly. Robin's steadfast tenacity in earning her master's was the inspiration for pursuing my own and Justin's ingenuity and boundless confidence motivate me to defy limits and pursue my goals. You are both missed.

I. INTRODUCTION

> The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. If a leader can't get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn't even matter.
>
> ~ Gilbert Amelio
> Former CEO of Apple and National Semiconductor Corporation

A. OVERVIEW

The September 11, 2001, hereafter referred to as September 11, terrorist attacks marks a pivotal moment of change in United States history. It was a moment of terror that divided recorded history into two distinct periods. The first period was a fundamental sense of security and invincibility before the attacks, followed by the second, a period of insecurity and vulnerability to the threat of terrorism in the homeland. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon transformed the way the nation views homeland security and terrorism. It changed the priorities of the nation. The current frame of reference on terrorism, national security, and fear of future attacks were informed by political remarks and speeches in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Political rhetoric that defined the terrorist attacks as acts of war laid the foundation for the justification for counterterrorism legislation that impinged individual freedoms and civil rights.

A systematic analysis of political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks is performed to determine whether political rhetoric contributed to threat inflation, public fear, and misperception of the security threats faced by the American public. An examination of the divergent scholarly views on the role of political rhetoric on public perception, emotion, and reaction was performed to uncover methods that discouraged critical assessment and debate of policy alternatives, and fostered public fear. The objective of the study is to describe the characteristics of political rhetoric and the discursive devices employed in response to the attacks on the WTC and Pentagon, which influenced public threat perception and fear. A critical analysis of rhetoric framing

the terrorist attacks will provide an understanding of the relationship between political rhetoric, threat inflation, and public fear, as well as the processes that shaped public response to the attacks and subsequent policy initiatives.

This thesis examines the role of political rhetoric in threat inflation and public fear with discourse analysis of the earliest text and speech acts surrounding the terrorist attacks. The focus is on rhetoric that communicates the predominant narrative on the meaning of the September 11, and the discursive tools employed to justify legislation proposed and policy enacted. The discursive tactics include threat inflation, patriotism, national unity, polarization, artificial dichotomies, and binary opposition. This study uncovers the characteristics of the rhetoric examined, and the positions ascribed and taken by political actors. The discussion of the findings is supported by the literature reviewed on fear, threat inflation, terrorism, and the influence of rhetoric in establishing support for counterterrorism legislation and foreign policy measures.

The discourse analysis of speech acts of the political leadership in the post-September 11 climate is undertaken. The method of analysis is through the framework of positioning and securitization theory. The primary reason positioning analysis was chosen to explore the research questions is that it is a nice fit for group discourse and adds different dimensions to this study in that it keeps to the timeframe involved and does not allow future knowledge or hindsight to factor into the analysis. Positioning theory is also an emerging theoretical framework that the author found interesting and recognized that it has not been used extensively in the research of homeland security. The analysis examines how the speech acts contextualize the role of the public and the terrorist, and positioned both. It demonstrates that the rhetorical choices that emphasized fear were part of the mechanics for threat inflation seen in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

B. PROBLEM SPACE

Before the dust settled from the collapse of the Twin Towers or the fires were extinguished in the leveled portion of the iconic Pentagon on September 11, Americans were flooded with visual images of chaos and messages of loss and fear. These messages

were represented in the fear-filled faces of the fleeing victims, fatigued first responders, and frantic family and friends affixing flyers on buildings in what would become known as Ground Zero. Shell-shocked survivors and Americans around the world were in a state of disbelief that their nation had been attacked on the home front, and thus, a sense of invincibility was shattered. Eventually confusion, uncertainty, and despair were replaced by sadness, anger, fear, and public demands for retribution.[1] Yet, the troubling sense of vulnerability lingered in American communities.[2]

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Subcommittee on Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences issued a report in 2005, *Combating Terrorism: Research Priorities in the Social, Behavioral and Economics Science*, that recognized the need to include scholarly exploration in the social, behavioral and economic (SBE) fields of study in response to terrorism.[3] The NSTC report affirms the need to investigate the impact of the fear response on individuals and communities, and its effects on the ability to combat terrorism by noting that "strategies will have to harness our understanding of human behavior at the level of the individual and the group."[4] Studies in the fields of emergency medicine and disaster management contribute to the understanding of human behavior under catastrophic conditions. Researchers examining the effects of fear during the SARS epidemic indicated when individuals mistook fear symptoms for signs of infection; they may have ignored public warnings to shelter-in-place, and instead, "flocked to hospitals, emergency departments and clinics… and actually increased the

[1] Susan E. Brandon and Andrew P. Silke, "Near-and Long-term Psychological Effects of Exposure to Terrorist Attacks," *Psychology of Terrorism* (2007): 179; Jennifer S. Lerner, Roxana M. Gonzalez, Deborah A. Small, and Baruch Fischhoff, "Effects of Fear and Anger on Perceived Risks of Terrorism: A National Field Experiment," *Psychological Science* 14, no. 2 (March 2003): 144.

[2] Wei-Na Lee, Ji-Young Hong, and Se-Jin Lee, "Communicating with American Consumers in the Post 9/11 Climate: An Empirical Investigation of Consumer Ethnocentrism in the United States," *International Journal of Advertising* 22, no. 4 (2003): 489; Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (2003): 371.

[3] National Science and Technology Council Subcommittee on Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, *Combating Terrorism: Research Priorities in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, National Science and Technology Council, 2005), 3, 7.

[4] Ibid., 6.

density and disease transmission by mixing uninfected persons with those already infectious."[5]

In his study on disaster response and management, Frederick M. Burkle, Jr. states the goal of rhetoric during crisis should be to provide information that lessens "the sense of danger and fear" that leads the public to make decisions that keep them safe and reduces the impact of the fear response on emergency services.[6] He goes on to report that "fear is mitigated cognitively by effective information that is honest and transparent."[7] Effective information should be a goal of political rhetoric during crises. Yet, Cass R. Sunstein notes, "In the face of probability neglect, government is unlikely to be successful if it attempts to reduce fear by emphasizing the low likelihood of another terrorist attack."[8] Probability neglect is characterized by Richard Zeckhauser and Cass R. Sunstein as, "When emotions take charge, probabilities get neglected. Consequently, in the face of a fearsome risk, people often exaggerate the benefits of preventive, risk-reducing, or ameliorative measures. In both personal life and politics, the result is harmful overreactions to risk."[9] In response to the impact of emotion in assessing the threat posed by terrorism, Sunstein asks:

> If probability neglect leads the public to be excessively concerned about terrorism-related risks, should government respond? At first glance, the answer would appear to be negative; ordinarily private and public resources should not be devoted to small problems, even if an ignorant public is demanding action. But the negative answer is too simple. Fear, whether rational or not, is itself a cost, and it is likely to lead to a range of other costs, in the form of countless ripple effects, including a reluctance to fly or to appear in public places. If government is able to reduce the

---

[5] Frederick M. Burkle, "Population-based Triage Management in Response to Surge-capacity Requirements during a Large-scale Bioevent Disaster," *Academic Emergency Medicine* 13, no. 11 (2006): 1122.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Cass R. Sunstein, "Terrorism and Probability Neglect," *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 26, no. 2–3 (2003): 132.

[9] Richard Zeckhauser and Cass R. Sunstein, "Dreadful Possibilities, Neglected Probabilities," in *The Irrational Economist: Making Decisions in a Dangerous World*, ed. Erwann Michel-Kerjan and Paul Sloviv (New York, NY: Public Affairs Books, 2010), 116.

> level of fear produced by probability neglect, it should do so, at least if the costs outweigh the benefits.[10]

Fear is a frightening and potentially debilitating emotion and humans will go to extremes to avoid it.[11] John E. Mueller notes that terrorism-induced fear can lead to "skittish, risk-averse behavior" and "widely adopted forms of defensive behavior with cumulative cost."[12] Some scholars interpret the observed rise in the number of people choosing automobiles over air transportation as a fear response to the September 2001 attacks.[13] While psychologist Clark McCauley reasons that "decreased willingness to fly need not imply any increase in fear,"[14] it is clear that probability neglect leads people to spend money and time eluding an event with a low probability of occurrence to avoid the "anxiety-pervaded experience;" ultimately, this behavior leads to a significant increase in the number of vehicular fatalities.[15]

The NSTC report states, "Terrorism is not a threat that can be met by missiles in silos; it is a threat that is met by people in communities."[16] In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the narrative that provided social and political meaning for people in communities had significant influence on homeland security policies, some of which remain in effect more than a decade later.[17] Research scientists in the fields of psychology and economics have demonstrated the impact of emotions on action and

---

[10] Sunstein, "Terrorism and Probability Neglect," 122.

[11] Tom Pyszczynski, "What Are We So Afraid Of? A Terror Management Theory Perspective on the Politics of Fear," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 827.

[12] John E. Mueller. *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 189.

[13] David G. Myers, "Do We Fear the Right Things," *APS Observer* 14, no. 3 (2001): 31.

[14] Clark McCauley, "Psychological Issues in Understanding Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism," in *Psychology of Terrorism*, ed. Bruce Bongar et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 24.

[15] Sunstein, "Terrorism and Probability Neglect," 132; Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 150; Gerd Gigerenzer, "Dread Risk, September 11, and Fatal Traffic Accidents," *Psychological Science* 15, no. 4 (2004): 286.

[16] National Science and Technology Council, "Combating Terrorism: Research Priorities in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences," 19.

[17] Richard Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: 'Islamic Terrorism' in Political and Academic Discourse," *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 394.

decision making.[18] In times of crisis, the rhetorical choices of political leaders can influence the perceptions, emotions, and reactions of individuals who comprise communities. Therefore, "even a reduction in baseless fear is a social good."[19] This viewpoint is supported by Mueller's observation that "the reduction of fear, anxiety and overreaction is in fact actually quite central to dealing with terrorism."[20]

When the source of public fear is an incomprehensible act, as was the case on September 11, political leaders can use the fear response to influence the public.[21] Public fear can be employed by politicians to garner support for political agendas, especially during election campaigns.[22] Politicians from both major American political parties have used public fear to induce citizens to vote for a particular agenda. One of the first and most memorably successful political advertisements evoking fear was the Lyndon B. Johnson "Daisy" commercial aired only once during the 1964 presidential election.

Research conducted by Graeme R. Newman and Ronald V. Clarke showed, "local response to the threat of terrorism is as much affected by public fear as is the national response."[23] Arjen Boin et al. note, "In the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair repeatedly emphasized the clear and present

---

[18] Carroll E. Izard, "Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2, no. 3 (2007): 260; Zeckhauser and Sunstein, "Dreadful Possibilities, Neglected Probabilities," 122.

[19] Sunstein, "Terrorism and Probability Neglect," 132.

[20] Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 142.

[21] Pyszczynski, "What Are We So Afraid Of? A Terror Management Theory Perspective on the Politics of Fear," 827; Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 3 (2006): 372.

[22] Rachel Pain and Susan J. Smith, *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 11.

[23] Graeme R. Newman and Ronald V. Clarke, *Policing Terrorism: An Executive's Guide* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. 2008), 18.

danger posed by Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD)."[24] An enduring state of fear can erode the public's sense of security, as well as waste resources and manpower.[25]

The terrorist attacks afforded political leaders an opportunity to provide reassuring messages of hope and resilience to a stunned nation during a time of crisis and uncertainty. An exploration of the relationship between political rhetoric, threat inflation, and public fear post-September 11 is in accordance with the call for SBE sciences research from the NSTC.

This thesis examines rhetoric that disseminated the September 11 narrative, techniques employed to unify the nation, and secure considerable consent for counterterrorism policy. The capacity to control the discourse that defined the external threat of further terrorist attacks was achieved through the use of the war metaphor.

> The war metaphor is ubiquitous, connected to strong emotions and social values and it is widely useful in politics of mass appeal. The metaphor creates pressure for unity, solidarity, mobilization of people and resources for the common good (against the foe).[26]

The administration described the attacks as "acts of war," and termed the counterterrorism response a war on terrorism. The rhetoric employed social identity theory (SIT) tenets that foster group cohesion, unifying diverse populations, while dictating the suitable public response and acceptable behaviors. These techniques were crucial in gaining support for aggressive leadership and the extreme policy initiatives that followed.[27] The rhetoric of the administration presumably aimed at alleviating the threat of terrorism through counterterrorism measures; discursively positioned the public to rally-round-the-flag in support of the president. The analysis of the selected speech

---

[24] Arjen Boin et al., *The Politics of Crisis Management* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69.

[25] Graeme R. Newman and Ronald V. Clarke, *Policing Terrorism: An Executive's Guide*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. 2008), 18; Vincent E. Henry, "The Need for a Coordinated and Strategic Local Police Approach to Terrorism: A Practitioner's Perspective," in *Examining Political Violence: Studies of Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Internal War*, ed. David Lowe, Austin T. Turk, and Dilip K. Da (United Kingdom: CRC Press, 2013), 332.

[26] Heinz Steinert, "The Indispensable Metaphor of War: On Populist Politics and the Contradictions of the State's Monopoly of Force," *Theoretical Criminology* 7, no. 3 (2003): 268.

[27] Ibid., 266.

acts unpacks the methods that inform political rhetoric surrounding the narrative of September 11.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The September 11 terrorist attacks are considered a watershed moment in U.S. history and a crossroads in U.S. foreign policy initiatives and counterterrorism policies.[28] Political rhetoric in response to the attacks ushered in a change in the nation's approach to the fight against terrorism. The rarely disputed narrative that defined the attacks was filled with salient reminders of death. These thoughts of death are believed to have led to the suppression of dissent in the months following the terrorist attacks.[29] The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) terror alert system added to the sense of vulnerability to the threat of impending terrorist attacks.[30] This thesis explores how the public came to view terrorism against the U.S. homeland as an existential threat and addresses the question of whether the political rhetoric around terrorism cultivate fear and induced public consent on security initiatives and counterterrorism policy.

While researchers in the fields of international affairs, psychology, social psychology, terror management theory, and political science investigate the process and causes of threat inflation, the relationship to public perception and political rhetoric, and the use of different theoretical frameworks produces the divergent results. Scholars have proposed theories on the causes of threat inflation that fall into four paradigms: realist, psychological, domestic political, and constructivist.[31] The realist approach emphasizes insufficient information and uncertainty about the capabilities and intentions of adversaries with a focus on worst-case analysis that lead to threat inflation.[32] The psychological model asserts cognitive and fundamental attribution errors cause leaders to

---

[28] Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," 365.

[29] Pyszczynski, "What Are We So Afraid of? A Terror Management Theory Perspective on the Politics of Fear," 834.

[30] Rose McDermott and Philip G. Zimbardo, "The Psychological Consequences of Terrorist Alerts," *Psychology of Terrorism* (2007): 358.

[31] Trevor A. Thrall and Jane K. Cramer, ed., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2009), 3.

[32] Ibid., 3–4.

overestimate threats.[33] The domestic political system of threat inflation proposes that leaders oversell the threat to mobilize public support for policy in the interest of the nation.[34] The constructivist perspective argues threat perception and inflation are socially constructs "historically and culturally determined, rooted in national identity, norms, and values, which in turn reflect collective discursive processes within the society."[35]

While this thesis does not attempt to determine the causes of threat inflation, the different research approaches and findings represent agreement on the existence of threat inflation, if not always the cause. The research findings represent and encourage further study in the field of homeland security on the relationship between political rhetoric, public perception, and threat inflation an appropriate topic for further scholarly evaluation.

This thesis analyzes the rhetorical techniques political leaders used to frame the September 2001 attacks and the subsequent influence on public perception of the threat. Specifically, this study explores how the Bush administration framed the terrorism threat to influence public perception of the threat to encourage support for the administration's policy objectives.

By examining political rhetoric post-September 2001, this thesis attempts to illustrate the impact of threat inflation on public acceptance of legislation and counterterrorism policy during a period of national insecurity. Revealing the influence of political rhetoric on public perception, emotion, and reaction should allow for greater public debate and critical assessment of future counterterrorism policy, as well as provide information that permits the public to make informed decisions that reduce the fear response during emergencies.

---

[33] Thrall and Cramer, *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*, 4–6.

[34] Ibid., 6–9.

[35] Ibid., 9–11.

D. DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT TERMS

Edward Schiappa, a professor of comparative media studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), wrote:

> Definitions bring into existence a special sort of social knowledge: a shared understanding among people about themselves, the objects of their world, and how they ought to use language; knowledge typically taking the form of an explicit and often "authoritative" articulation of what particular words mean and how they should be used to refer to reality. Describing definitions as "rhetorically induced" calls attention to the persuasive processes that definitions inevitably involve. Not all definitions are accepted and used.[36]

In an effort to be explicit about the meaning conveyed by certain words, the author includes the following definitions for terms used extensively in this study. The purpose is to ensure the definitions are shared, understood, and accepted by the audience she seeks to inform.

1. Political Rhetoric

Noted political scientist Murray J. Edelman wrote on describing political language, "It is language about political events and developments that people experience; even events that are close by take their meaning from the language used to depict them. So political language is political reality."[37] Communications scholar David Zarefsky asserts that presidential rhetoric "defines political reality."[38] He continues by stating:

> Characterizations of social reality are not "given"; they are chosen from among multiple possibilities and hence always could have been otherwise. Whatever characterization prevails will depend on choices made by political actors. People participate actively in shaping and giving meaning to their environment, and they do so primarily by means of naming situations within it. Naming a situation provides the basis for understanding it and determining the appropriate response. Because of his

---

[36] Edward Schiappa, *Constructing Reality through Definitions: The Politics of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 1.

[37] Murray Edelman, "Political Language and Political Reality," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 18, no. 01 (1985): 10.

[38] David Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 611.

> prominent political position and his access to the means of communication, the president, by defining a situation, might be able to shape the context in which events or proposals are viewed by the public.[39]

Aristotle defined rhetoric "as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."[40] While presidential rhetoric "is concerned with the study of presidential public persuasion as it affects the ability of a President to exercise the powers of the office," the author uses the term "political rhetoric" to include messages put forward by members of president's cabinet, his political party, as well as the president himself.[41] Throughout this study, the author refers to this group of political leaders as "the administration." Political rhetoric, while similar to presidential rhetoric, goes further to include discourse of administration leaders who reiterate the president's message in the social construction of political reality for the public audience.

2. Threat Inflation

International affairs literature defines a threat as a "situation in which one agent or group has either the capability or intention to inflict a negative consequence on another agent or group."[42] Trevor A. Thrall and Jane A. Cramer define threat inflation as an "attempt by elites to create concern for a threat that goes beyond the scope and urgency that a disinterested analysis would justify."[43] Threat inflation as defined by Chaim Kaufmann encompasses the above concepts and goes further to include:

> (1) claims that go beyond the range of ambiguity that disinterested experts would credit as plausible; (2) a consistent pattern of worst-case assertions over a range of factual issues that are logically unrelated or only weakly related; (3) use of double standards in evaluating intelligence in a way that

---

[39] Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," 611.

[40] Aristotle, *Rhetorica: The Works of Aristotle*, vol. 11, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/a8rh/contents.html.

[41] Theodore Otto Windt, "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Field of Study," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (1986): 103.

[42] James W. Davis, *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 10.

[43] Thrall and Cramer, ed., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*, 1.

favors worst-case threat assessments; or (4) claims based on circular logic.[44]

Threat inflation is achieved through the use of rhetorical devices that exaggerate the potential harm to the nation from terrorism.[45] Threat inflation through fear inducing rhetoric, such as fear appeals, can facilitate security panics.[46] The fields of international relations and security studies use the term "security panic" to describe a similar concept to "moral panic," which is widely used in the field of sociology. Moral panics address threats to values and beliefs, which is closely echoed by the existential threats addressed by security panics.[47] Additionally, both concepts involve threats that must be accepted by the larger audience or they fail to be recognized as security panics, moral panics, or security threats.

3. Public Fear

The term "public fear" is used by Sunstein to refer to the American public's overreaction about national security related to the uncertainty and sense of risk (vulnerability) experienced in response to the threat of terrorist attacks.[48] The literature review highlights the different and numerous terms used in the academic world to define fear. Frank Furedi, David L. Altheide, and Tom Pyszczynski each provide insight on the concept of "politics of fear." Other terms used to describe the fear phenomenon include "collective fear," found in the writing of Fathali M. Moghaddam, and Barry Glassner's "culture of fear." Each term is introduced and definitions provided in the literature review that follows.

---

[44] Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 8.

[45] John Mueller, "Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration," *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 2 (2005): 222.

[46] Richard Cobden, *The Three Panics: An Historical Episode* (London: Cassell, 1804–1884), Kindle edition, 195–196.

[47] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 9.

[48] Cass R. Sunstein, "Fear and Liberty," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 977.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis examines the rhetoric choices of U.S. leaders in a time of sustained national fear in response to the September 2001 terror attacks. This period was identified as a "novel threat environment," which required a new approach to security.[49] The thesis analyzes the political rhetoric of the Bush Administration in response to the terrorist attacks to understand how security threats were framed post-September 11, 2001. Official government transcripts of speeches and public remarks made by the administration are the units of analysis examined through the framework of positioning theory and securitization theory. The objective is to understand the technique leaders used to construct the narrative of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the influence the narrative had on public perception, emotion, and reaction in the face of security threats.

The relationship between political rhetoric and public opinion is an area of divergence in the literature. Research conducted on leadership and agenda setting contend that policy choices and public opinion converge on salient issues, but the findings are contradictory as to which group—policy makers or the public—shapes opinion. Other researchers report the existence of a reciprocal relationship.[50] Research about the support for the Iraq War reveals the role of political leaders' rhetoric in shaping attitudes of the American public.[51] This rhetoric was seen in the earliest remarks of President George W. Bush when he stated:

> I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair

[49] Executive Office of the President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2002).

[50] Douglas C. Foyle, "Leading the Public to War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administration's Decision to Go to War in Iraq," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16, no. 3 (2004): 270.

[51] Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 03 (2005): 525.

> treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.[52]

Another example of a political act that sought to shape public opinion was the September 15, 2001 Congressional resolution condemning "bigotry and violence against Arab-Americans, American Muslim, and Americans from South Asia in the wake of terrorist attacks."[53]

A. FEAR

In exploring the available literature, a working definition of fear was not readily available. In most studies, the definition was implied or the readers' understanding was assumed. This oversight by researchers is confirmed by Furedi's comment that "writers and thinkers tend to use the term "fear" as a taken-for-granted concept that needs little explanation or elaboration."[54] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines fear as:

> The emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil; An instance of the emotion; a particular apprehension of some future evil.; A state of alarm or dread.; Apprehension or dread of something that will or may happen in the future.; Apprehensive feeling towards anything regarded as a source of danger, or towards a person regarded as able to inflict injury or punishment.[55]

However, several researchers developed definitions to elucidate their use of the term. Rachel Pain defines fear as the emotional response to a threat, real or imagined, that has social meaning and can have a range of positive and negative effects.[56] She views fear as "a social and spatial rather than purely psychological phenomenon."[57] More

---

[52] George W. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress" (speech, United States Capitol, September 20, 2001).

[53] Deborah J. Schildkraut, "The More Things Change...American Identity and Mass and Elite Responses to 9/11," *Political Psychology* 23, no. 3 (2002): 522.

[54] Frank Furedi, "The Only Thing We Have to Fear is the 'Culture of Fear' Itself," *American Journal of Sociology* 32 (2007): 231–234.

[55] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[56] Rachel Pain, "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics," *Progress in Human Geography* 33, no. 4 (2009): 477.

[57] Ibid., 466.

specific to this thesis, Corey Robin defines political fear as "people's felt apprehension of some harm to their collective well-being—the fear of terrorism, panic over crime, anxiety about moral decay—or the intimidation wielded over men and women by governments or groups."[58]

The history of the United States shows that during times of crisis, most notably war, public fear has lead to policy overreaction. According to critical discourse analysis scholar, Teun Van Dijk, the reduction of civil liberties and the suppression of dissent in the aftermath of the 2001 terror attacks were achieved in response to inflated security threats.[59] An example of the erosion of democracy was seen in the treatment of Muslims in the United States after the terrorist attacks. The creation of an enemy through the process of "othering" provides an outgroup for the displacement of aggression. In the aftermath of the terror attacks, people of Muslim descent were subjected to elevated law enforcement attention and detention, which provided a sense of security to the larger population.[60]

John Keane writes that extreme fear:

> …robs subjects of their capacity to act with or against others. It leaves them shaken, sometimes traumatized. And when large numbers fall under the dark clouds of fear, no sun shines on civil society. Fear saps its energies and tears and twists at the institutions of political representation. Fear eats the soul of democracy."[61]

While the lack of a requisite definition for fear might be viewed as a weakness in the field of study, two concepts prevalent in the scholarly writings are "politics of fear" and "culture of fear." Both terms are used frequently in the literature reviewed, and are therefore, central to the study undertaken in this thesis. However, the difference between the two concepts is subtle; the extreme fear described by Keane has been labeled culture of fear, politics of fear, and security panics.

---

[58] Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2.

[59] Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," 370.

[60] Kareem Shora, "National Security Entry Exit Registration System (NSEERS)," *Cardozo Public Law Policy, and Ethics Journal* 2, no. 1 (2003): 73.

[61] John Keane, "Fear and Democracy," in *Violence and Politics: Globalization's Paradox*, ed. Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 22.

1. Culture of fear

The term "culture of fear," introduced by Glassner, refers to powerful forces in society "that conspire to cultivate and maintain a sense of fear among the population" which is in furtherance of group interest over the best interest of society.[62] Among these forces are government organizations, politicians, and the media. Social scientists studying moral panic and risk society use Stanley Cohen's term, "claims-makers," to refer to these powerful forces.[63] These same forces use emotional rhetoric to influence "information processing, risk assessment, and receptivity to arguments," and to persuade audiences.[64] Law enforcement agencies seeking federal funding for gang units are examples of government organizations, as claims-makers, which cultivate fear and instigate moral panics about the problem of youth gang violence.[65]

The emotion of fear is "viewed as driving political actions, as well as being used and affected by them."[66] The emotional rhetoric of war is comprised of language that encourages feelings of nationalism and patriotism, and is a rhetorical device used by presidents to persuade a nation of the appropriateness of war.[67] In his study of rhetoric, Aristotle remarked on the capacity of emotions to be swayed by rhetoric and affect the listeners' receptiveness to the speaker's points of view.[68]

---

[62] Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* (New York: Basic Books,1999): 21; Engin F. Isin, "The Neurotic Citizen," *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004): 219; Mark Konty, Blythe Duell, and Jeff Joireman, "Scared Selfish: A Culture of Fear's Values in the Age of Terrorism," *The American Sociologist* 35, no. 2 (2004): 93; Dawn Rothe and Stephen L. Muzzatti, "Enemies Everywhere: Terrorism, Moral Panic, and U.S. Civil Society," *Critical Criminology* 12, no. 3 (2004): 336.

[63] Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*.

[64] Neta C. Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000): 149.

[65] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009), 67.

[66] Pain, "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics," 470.

[67] John M. Murphy, ""Our Mission and Our Moment": George W. Bush and September 11th," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2003): 609.

[68] Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," 126.

Examples in the research on politicians establishing a culture of fear include the administration's manipulation of the terror alert system as a means of social control.[69] While Engin F. Isin acknowledges that a "culture of fear" is prevalent in society, he argues that underestimating the importance of affect in how subjects conduct themselves is problematic. He continues by noting the ability of government to use deception to control behavior may be overestimated and fails to appreciate the will of the people.[70] Furedi seems to straddle the divide by stating that the role of government's self-interest is inflated, and while yet also acknowledging the role of social forces in the promotion of fear.[71] The role of politics in the construction of fear is an area in the research literature that lacks consensus.

Another area of divergence is the role of the relationships of the various claims-makers to one another in initiating the politics and culture of fear. Altheide suggests politicians and "formal agents of social control" employ the media as a tool to promote their agenda by presenting their issue to the media "wrapped in an attractive fear package."[72] Social scientists studying fear in the context of moral panics and drug use contend that political rhetoric influences the media frames.[73] However, Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda identify the media not merely as tools of political forces, but as the most effective actors in the promotion of fear during the elevation of moral panics.[74] Still, other social scientists contend the role of political or policy rhetoric in the course of moral panics has not been fully explored.[75] Some view the media as pursuing its own interest at the expense of the public:

---

[69] Rothe and Muzzatti, "Enemies Everywhere: Terrorism, Moral Panic, and U.S. Civil Society," 327.

[70] Isin, "The Neurotic Citizen," 220.

[71] Frank Furedi, "Precautionary Culture and the Rise of Possibilistic Risk Assessment," *Erasmus L. Rev.* 2 (2009): 207.

[72] David L. Altheide, "The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear," *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1997): 665.

[73] James E. Hawdon, "The Role of Presidential Rhetoric in the Creation of a Moral Panic: Reagan, Bush, and the War on Drugs," *Deviant Behavior* 22, no. 5 (2001): 420.

[74] Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, 90.

[75] Hawdon, "The Role of Presidential Rhetoric in the Creation of a Moral Panic: Reagan, Bush, and the War on Drugs," 420.

> People fear terrorism because it places them in an almost totally powerless position relative to the terrorist. This powerlessness is the direct result of the fact that no one knows when the terrorist will strike, simply that it will occur. The public is completely at the mercy of terrorists willing to attack anything, anytime, anywhere, and is thus in a totally subordinate position *vis-à-vis* the terrorist. If political, media, and other powerful interests further amplify the calculated probability of this subordination, the inference is made that this powerless position is likely to occur at any moment. Fear caused by the very real threat of terrorism is increased by the amplification of that threat by purveyors of the culture of fear.[76]

While this thesis does not explore the role of media in the establishment of fear, the literature review demonstrates the role of different forces in shaping public fear is an area of departure.

2. Politics of Fear

Altheide characterized "'politics of fear" as "policy makers' promotion and use of audience beliefs … about danger, risk and fear in order to achieve certain goals."[77] He asserts that fear is socially constructed, and subsequently, "exploited by leaders for their own survival and policies rather than that of their audience."[78] Similarly, Isin warns that overloading the public with risk messages allowed "governments to capitalize on fear by governing through the beliefs, behaviors and assent of the 'neurotic citizen.'"[79] He labels this type of fear as "governing through neurosis" and believes the government manipulates public emotions, such as fear, anxiety, and insecurity, which cloud the decision-making process.[80] Rachel Pain and Susan J. Smith concur with Isin's theory that governments assault citizens with messages of risk to capitalize on fear, and govern through the assent of the "neurotic citizen."[81] As a consequence of the Global War on

---

[76] Konty, Duell, and Joireman, "Scared Selfish: A Culture of Fear's Values in the Age of Terrorism," 96.

[77] David L. Altheide. *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006), 15.

[78] Ibid., 8.

[79] Isin, "The Neurotic Citizen," 217.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Pain and Smith, ed., *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday*, 2.

Terror (GWOT), Pain and Smith contend the experience of fear has become a "globalized phenomena" and the discourse surrounding it a "politically convenient" tool.[82]

3. Security Panics

Periods of public fear, based on often exaggerated external security threats, have been coined "security panics."[83] The central theme of British statesman Richard Cobden's *The Three Panics* is the panic surrounding periods of exaggerated national security threats.[84] Cobden defines panics as occurrences of public fear, and explores panic in the context of British elites' response to inflated threats of invasion by France.[85] He found public fear was fueled by elite rhetoric that led to an arms race, comparable to rhetoric in the United States that foreshadowed the events of the Cold War. Similarly, Alan Wolfe contends that post-World War II ambitions of the foreign policy elites required "concerted effort to instill fear and hysteria into American attitudes" toward the Soviet Union.[86] Examples in U.S. history of disproportionate response to fear include the Sedition Act of 1918, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the McCarran Act of 1950. These overreactions undertaken during periods of security panics characterize war hysteria.[87]

From a social psychological perspective, security panics are best explained as:

> A range of social mechanisms—cognitive heuristics and biases, various forms of cascading and herding, conformity and preference falsification, and so on—cause periodic panics in which aroused publics demand repressive measures to curtail the civil liberties of perceived enemies of the nation, particularly noncitizens or other outsiders. Government officials may themselves panic, or will at least supply the panicky measures that constituents demand. The standard remedy is to urge

---

[82] Pain and Smith, ed., *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday*, 1.

[83] Sunstein, "Fear and Liberty," 967; Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus* (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 1984), 6.

[84] Cobden, *The Three Panics: An Historical Episode*.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus*, 9.

[87] Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2004), 12–13.

changes to legal doctrine or institutions, in order to curtail government's power to repress civil liberties in response to security panics.[88]

When a security panic is established, leaders respond to public anxiety with protective policies.[89] The creation of the DHS is an example of swift non-evaluative action in response to fears about domestic security.[90] A hurried response to public fear may begin a movement toward political exceptionalism.[91]

B. POLITICAL RHETORIC

The use of fear-inducing rhetoric in furtherance of policy agenda is not a new phenomenon.[92] Giandomenico Majone defines policy rhetoric as "the use of arguments to clarify a position with respect to an issue as well as a means to bring other people to this position."[93] Mueller contends that in the aftermath of the September 2001 terror attacks, emotions became tools for the advancement of political agenda, sometimes at the expense of the public sense of security.[94] The consensus among researchers is that the Bush administration aroused public fear through rhetoric, such as "our fear of a mushroom cloud," and the constant reference to WMD.[95] This tactic was used to garner support for the administration's political agenda and to disarm dissent against the narrative that Saddam Hussein's acquiring and using nuclear weapons against the United

---

[88] Adrian Vermeule, "Libertarian Panics," 36 *Rutgers LJ* 871 (2004).

[89] Cass R. Sunstein, *Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Paul Slovic, *The Perception of Risk* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1127.

[90] Jef Huysmans, "Minding Exceptions: The Politics of Insecurity and Liberal Democracy," *Contemporary Political Theory* 3, no. 3 (2004): 332.

[91] Ibid., 322.

[92] Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 115.

[93] Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 2.

[94] Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 47; Kenneth Prewitt et al., "The Politics of Fear after 9/11," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 1145.

[95] George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on Iraq From Cincinnati, Ohio" (speech, Cincinnati, OH, October 7, 2002); Condoleezza Rice, interview by Wolf Blitzer, *CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*, September 8, 2002.

States was a realistic threat.[96] According to Douglas Kellner, fear was effectively used to pass the Patriot Act in October 2001.[97]

Altheide noted that "leaders and politicians want to be fear effective"[98]and Brian Massumi described the terror alert system as, "fear in-action … a tactic as enormously reckless as it is politically powerful."[99] An example of the effective use of fear can be seen in election campaign advertisements. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy used America's fear of "communists in our midst" to help win re-election and his infamous chairmanship on the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The visual specter of a wolf pack used to portray Senator John Kerry as weak was reminiscent of the Cold War-era grizzly bear ad used by the Reagan administration to remind the voting public about the continuing threat from Russia and the need for strong leadership capable of recognizing that threat.[100] From election ads that attempt to highlight an opponent's leadership weaknesses to rhetoric circumventing political opposition to controversial agenda, examples of fear-effective rhetoric abound.[101]

---

[96] Boin et al., *The Politics of Crisis Management*, 69; Sharon Begley et al., "The Roots of Fear," *Newsweek* 24 (2007): 26; Foyle, "Leading the Public to War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administration's Decision to Go to War in Iraq," 274; Douglas Kellner, "Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the "War on Terror,"" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2007): 622; Nancy Chang, *Silencing Political Dissent: How Post-September 11 Anti-Terrorism Measures Threaten our Civil Liberties* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011), 98.

[97] Kellner, "Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the "War on Terror,"" 622.

[98] Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*, 22.

[99] Brian Massumi, "Fear (the Spectrum Said)," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 13, no. 1 (2005): 47.

[100] Presidential Campaign Commercials, "The Living Room Candidate," accessed May 25, 2013, http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials.

[101] Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*, 6.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. METHODS

A. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

> The attacks of 9/11 provided the Bush administration with a rationale for shifting the normal and customarily recognized practices of business within government institutions toward new practices that would define the new social framework for the War on Terror. 'Almost without discussion, it is agreed that a new kind of enemy required a new kind of tactic.[102]

Rhetorical choices, combined with political stature, positioned President Bush as the primary voice to establish the meaning of the September 2001 attacks. His pronouncement of terrorism as an existential threat to the security of the nation led to the formation of the DHS, passage of the PATRIOT Act, and the GWOT. The use of rhetorical devices to inflate security threats is analyzed by utilizing discourse analysis through the theoretical framework of positioning theory and securitization theory. This thesis employs two theoretical methods to examine political rhetoric of the administration and threat inflation in response to the September 2001 attacks.

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach built on scholarly contribution from sociology, linguistics, cognitive psychology, communications, and philosophy.[103] Discourse analysis looks at the structure of text and the methods of constructing meaning through language within a cultural context. The primary goal in analyzing discourse is to understand how words (text) are used to shape reality. Meaning constructed through text, which refers to written, spoken, or symbolic words can be conveyed in narratives that contribute to broader social and cultural understanding. In this sense, discourse is a social action and constructs social reality. People make sense of the world through the use of language. The study of discourse has historical roots in the works of French philosopher

[102] Fathali M. Moghaddam and Rom Harré, *Words of Conflict, Words of War: How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2010), 52.

[103] Thomas A. Schwandt, *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 57–58.

Michel Foucault who, focused on the production of knowledge through language, saw discourse as the process of "taking up" positions to make sense of the world.[104]

1. Positioning Theory

The "use of positioning theory and its analytical methods to bring to light the cognitive processes by which rights and duties are defined and distributed among the relevant population, which may be the whole body of the citizenry."[105] The origins of positioning theory are in the domain of marketing that describes it as the communication approach that allows individuals to "position" their product relative to the competition.[106] "Appropriated and expanded upon by social-psychologist the constitution of positioning analysis consists of a mutually determining triad of positions, storylines and illocutionary force that structure the meaning and actions of the participants."[107] Positions are dynamic and fluid yet tied to the "contextual" episode in which they occur. "Positioning theory is about how people use words (and discourse of all types) to situate themselves and others."[108] Discursive interactions can occur on the interpersonal, institutional, and societal level.[109] Once people take up a position in the discursive paradigm, they accept the rights, duties, and obligations allocated to that position. They are socially constructed, instinctively agreed upon, and understood by the parties involved. Positions can be questioned, resisted, and negotiated, which can lead to repositioning (second order positioning). "The act of positioning thus refers to the assignment of fluid 'parts' or

---

[104] Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, vol. 2. (New York: Sage, 1997), 44.

[105] Moghaddam and Harré, *Words of Conflict, Words of War: How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting*, 2.

[106] Rom Harré, and Luk Van Langenhove, *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action* (Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 16.

[107] Moghaddam and Harré, *Words of Conflict, Words of War: How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting*.

[108] Rom Harré and Fathali M. Moghaddam, ed., *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 2.

[109] Harré and Langenhove, *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action*, 10.

'roles' to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts."[110]

The positioning triangle or triad "is an analytical tool that highlights the relationships between the building blocks of meaning, which are constituted by three background conditions:"[111]

> *Position*: a cluster of rights and duties to perform certain actions with certain significance as acts, but which also may include prohibitions or denials of access to some of the local repertoire of meaningful acts.
>
> *Speech and other acts*: every socially significant action, intended movement, or speech must be interpreted as an act, a socially meaningful and significant performance.
>
> *Storylines*: we have emphasized the enormous importance of the dynamics of social episodes, how they unfold as this or that person contributes to the pattern.[112]

Positioning theory provides an organizational framework and identifies elements that support the decision to adopt a securitization approach to the terrorist attacks. The inclusion of securitization theory helps to clarify the course by which the securitization of external threats was achieved.

2. Securitization Theory

Securitization theory is the analytical approach advanced by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde of the Copenhagen School (CS) for the use of discourse analysis in uncovering the meaning behind issues addressed in the field of security studies. The belief is that security is socially constructed through the utterance of actors in an attempt to move an issue from the arena of normal politics to the exceptionalism of the security realm.[113] The CS approach to understanding security issues is to define

---

[110] Harré and Langenhove, *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action*, 17.

[111] Nikki Slocum-Bradley, "The Positioning Diamond: A Trans-Disciplinary Framework for Discourse Analysis," Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 40, no. 1 (2010): 88.

[112] Harré and Moghaddam, ed., *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts*, 5–6.

[113] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 23–24.

security in terms of language use, specifically speech acts. The concept of "securitization" refers to the process of presenting an issue in terms of an existential security threat. Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde emphasize the roles of audience, securitizing actors (those who securitize an issue by declaring a referent object existentially threatened) and referent object (that which is existentially threatened and has a right/legitimate claim to survival) as crucial in the successful securitization process.[114] See Figure 1.

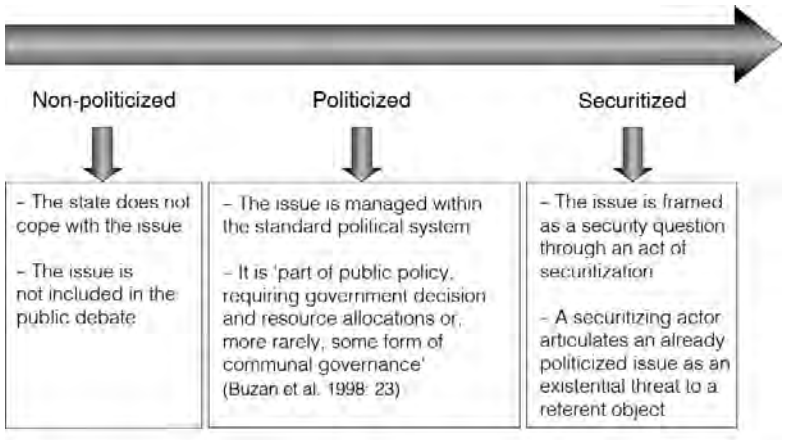

Figure 1. The Securitization Spectrum[115]

Security studies advance the concept of textual analysis to assess the perception of an issue as a security threat based on how the issue is securitized and its effects. This approach suggests the examination of speech acts through discourse analysis can determine whether a securitization attempt is successful. Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde demonstrate, through a case study example, that discourse analysis of the rhetoric of securitization is sufficiently distinct that a close reading of texts can generate instances of reproducible securitization.[116]

[114] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 35–36.

[115] Ralf Emmers, "'Securitization,'" in Contemporary Security Studies ed. Alan Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 201033, http://iheid.revues.org/docannexe/image/719/img-1.png.

[116] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 188.

The assertion that security is a social construct fits nicely with the quality of speech acts in positioning theory. Bringing together positioning theory and securitization theory, the ability to uncover the meaning behind attempts at securitization of issues and ensuing policy, is expanded.

The role of rights and duties found in positioning theory is prominent in securitization theory. This person or organization must be "positioned" with the rights and possibly duty to secure an issue. If the wrong actor attempts to place an issue in the world of security, that actor will not be successful. Successful issues will be articulated as existential threats to a referent object with the right to survival. The examination of the actual articulation involved in the move to securitize, through discourse analysis, and the aligning securitization with the positioning framework, allows for a dynamic dissection of the speech acts and their illocutionary force. In fact, Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde notes, "a complete analysis will also include more traditional political analysis of "the units interacting, facilitating conditions, and all of the other dimensions of security complex theory."[117]

Ultimately, the goal of this analysis is to delineate the manner in which the language of threat inflation through political rhetoric influenced public misperceptions of the threat environment. The examination of rhetorical choices that sustain a culture of fear is fundamentally about language use in the construction of meaning.

3. Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) is relevant to this thesis because the role of intergroup relations and social identity in the passive acceptance by Americans of the threat inflation, presidential policies, political agenda, such as the Patriot Act, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the supposed WMD holding Iraqi regime. In an effort to understand how groups develop their identity and cohesion, this thesis utilizes SIT. This review reveals the dynamics that allow political leaders to use a national sense of belonging and the identification of an outgroup for projecting feelings of uncertainty, anger, aggression, and possible conflict.

[117] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 177.

SIT, an analytical framework developed by Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, provides a means to view inter-group relations and conflict across a broad range of situations. While first proposed to examine intergroup discrimination, the dynamics of group identification is applicable to any group that provides a sense of distinctiveness and value to its members. SIT is founded on the premise "that individuals are motivated to achieve a positive and distinct identity," which can be accomplished through a range of social categorizations and group membership that hold significance and provide meaning for the individual.[118] Tajfel defines social identity, "as the part of the individuals' self–concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."[119] An important aspect of ingroup membership is the "mutual interaction and influence" members have towards one another and the "consensual validation of attitudes and values."[120] According to Strindberg, the motivation for group belonging is the distinct social identity provided, which can be founded on such "abstract" basis as shared religion or culture. The SIT framework provides context for the religious, cultural, and social dynamics at play in the attachment of an individual to a group. SIT highlights important differences between groups, how and why they form, and the social behaviors present within the studied group. The social context of the 9/11 terror attacks provided the administration with the ability to highlight intergroup conflict with an "us versus them" narrative. SIT can be employed to understand the role of social identity and nationalism better in the acceptance of the threat inflation by the American public.

Within the SIT framework, the existence or stability of a group is dependent on its ability to be the source of the social identity of its members while providing members with positive value. Group membership defines and reinforces who we are. Individuals with little in common came together under a state of nationalism described as rally-

[118] Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism, Democracy, and Intergroup Relations: International and National Contexts* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008), 94–95.

[119] Henri Tajfel, ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, vol. 7 (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

[120] Ibid., 15–16.

round-the-flag in support of the administrations' agenda.[121] The shared group values provide an increased sense of belonging and self-worth. Tajfel reduced the elements of SIT to three components that identify the value an individual must derive from group membership: cognitive, evaluative and emotion.[122]

The cognitive component of SIT (knowledge that people belong to a group) is achieved through the favorable experience of membership in the group of American citizens.[123] The evaluative component (*the group and/or people's membership in it may have a positive or negative connotation*) is derived from the positive value membership in the group provided through America's status as the only superpower and wealthy democratic nation.[124] Finally, the emotional component of SIT (*the cognitive and evaluative aspects of the group and people's membership in it may be accompanied by emotions towards the in-group and out-groups*) is derived from the feeling of superiority ingroup membership provides through its comparison to an identified outgroup.[125] These components are present in all groups regardless of group membership allowing for the study of social identification and intergroup relations.

A core feature of SIT postulates that group membership provides positive value to its members. In the aftermath of the terror attacks, presidential discourse helped to ignite a social identification in the form of patriotism and nationalism. This sense of national pride and sense of belonging was seen in the huge rally-round-the-flag phenomenon seen across the nation.[126] However, the positive value achieved from the patriotic fervor was related to the identification and marginalization of bias toward the outgroup. The identification of the "correct" target for outgroup comparison is guided by the unique

---

[121] Murphy, ""Our Mission and Our Moment:" George W. Bush and September 11th," 608.

[122] Henri Tajfel, ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 64–5.

[123] David W. Brannan, Philip F. Esler, and N. T. Anders Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists' Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001): 18.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Terrence L. Chapman and Dan Reiter, "The United Nations Security Council and the Rally'round the Flag Effect," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004): 894.

national culture.[127] According to Turner and Tajfel, "Pressures to evaluate one's own group positively through ingroup/outgroup comparisons lead social groups to attempt to differentiate themselves from each other."[128] Tajfel continues to explain the three variables—cognitive, evaluative and emotional—that influence group membership.[129]

According to the social identification model, group membership has a cognitive basis that may be 'switched on' by certain situations in ways that we do not fully understand.[130] Addressing the question of "Who I am" or social identification determines how people perceive themselves, and with which group they identify.[131] This idea of situations that lead to the adoption of a social identity may speak to the construction of a national identity by a large portion of American society in response to September 11 attacks.

The positive and distinctive values achieved through group membership leads to social comparisons that distinguishes/elevates the ingroup from the identified outgroup.[132] The national culture guides the identification of the "correct" target for comparison. These social comparisons can be seen in the "us versus them" rhetoric that helped determine to which group U.S. citizens belonged and identified the evil doers as the outgroup. As Americans, this nation embraced the national identity based on narrative that provided shared pride and group value.

4. Constructivist Approach

In this thesis, the author takes a constructivist approach to examine political rhetoric and threat inflation in the aftermath of the September 2001 terror attacks. The

---

[127] Fathali M. Moghaddam, "*Interobjectivity: The Collective Roots of Individual Consciousness and Social Identity,"* in *Individuality and the Group: Advances in Social Identity* ed. Tom Postmes and Jolanda Jetten (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2006), 163.

[128] Tajfel, ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*.

[129] Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 28.

[130] John C. Turner, "Toward a Cognitive Redefinition," in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* ed.. Henri Tajfel, vol. 7 (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21.

[131] Ibid., 16.

[132] Ibid., 17.

social constructivist paradigm of research refers to the tradition of scholarship that traces the origins of knowledge, meaning, and understanding to human relationships. It asserts, "reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world."[133] Constructivism maintains that the response to an event by a group or nation is dependent on "their shared knowledge, the collective meaning they attach to their situation, their authority and legitimacy, the rules, institutions and material resources they use to find their way, and their practices, or even, sometimes, their joint creativity."[134] It views currency, government, and rights as "social facts" that "have no material reality but exist only because people collectively believe they exist and act accordingly."[135]

Social facts are collective behaviors based on accepted truths about human institutions, and language is considered essential to the existence of human institutions according to the constructivist paradigm.[136] Securitization analysis of the language used to construct security issues advances the constructivist concept that social facts, such as security, are socially imposed.[137] Constructivism advances language as a human institution and positioning theory examines language to reveal how groups navigate reality through the distribution of rights and duties. The discursive process of assigning rights, duties, and positions revealed through positioning analysis align well with the constructivist approach to social reality.

5. Social Construction of Reality in International Relations

Depending on which theoretical paradigm an individual attends to, as a researcher within the field of international relations, it is inevitable that the idea of reality as a social construction will be confronted. Social construction of reality attempts to explain the way in which humans make sense of the world. The ontological belief is that people construct

---

[133] Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 319.

[134] Ibid., 320.

[135] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 393.

[136] John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (San Jose, CA: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 27.

[137] Ibid.

reality and assign meaning as they interact with and experience the world. Social construction of reality deals with the logic behind how the world is viewed (in which people exist). Sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann define reality simply "as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot "wish them away"), and …"knowledge" as the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics."[138] They continue to explain:

> Social order exists *only* as a product of human activity. No other ontological status may be ascribed to it without hopelessly obfuscating its empirical manifestations. Both in its genesis (social order is the result of past human activity) and its existence in any instant of time (social order exists only and insofar as human activity continues to produce it) it is a human product.[139]

Berger and Luckmann's seminal sociological treatise premise that all knowledge results from and is maintained through social interactions.[140] In the constructivist view, realities are socially constructed; constituted through language; organized and maintained through narrative; and lack essential truths.[141] The concept of the social world as a construction of social arrangements become ingrained in perceptions and rarely challenged or questioned. The cultural modes of behavior—doing, thinking, and feeling—are learned responses fixed in shared experiences through membership in society. With time, they become established cultural and social norms. These mechanisms of knowing and interpreting reality are cultural subscribed, and socialization is achieved through an assortment of variables, which include typification, institutionalization, and legitimation. Groups retain knowledge of their constructed reality through these processes.

---

[138] Peter Burger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1966), 1.

[139] Ibid., 52.

[140] Burger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*.

[141] Ibid.

6. Foucault

While the origins of the constructivist paradigm lies in the writing of Berger and Luckmann, French philosopher Michel Foucault is credited with the constructivist or poststructuralist view that challenged the positivist or humanist belief in universal truths. Foucault asserts discourse is the means by which knowledge is created. Text, rules, or documents that become institutionalized establish meaning for a society's members. Foucault saw these historical narratives as emanating from the most powerful in society and the means of shaping cultural and social norms.[142] The emphasis on language use in the construction of concepts that gain meaning resonates with Foucault's premise/idea that history is revealed by leaders, positioned with rights and duties, who contribute to the construction of future outcomes through the use of language.[143]

7. Socialization

Socialization is defined in the Oxford English online dictionary as "the process of forming associations with others; the process by which a person learns to function within a particular society or group by internalizing its values and norms."[144]

Primary agents of socialization are usual family members. Societal forces that act on people largely through secondary socialization include school, peers, media, and government. William A. Gamson et al. highlight the role of media and the state as socializing agents:

> By now the story is familiar. We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this

[142] Michel Foucault, "Orders of Discourse," *Social Science Information* 10, no. 2 (1971): 8.

[143] Ibid., 11.

[144] "Socialization," December 2013, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183747?redirectedFrom=socialization.

> system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible.[145]

George Gerber's cultivation theory, "examines the extent to which cumulative exposure to television contributes to viewers' conceptions of social reality..."[146] Further research confirms the greater exposure to televised mediated events, the greater the impact on people's worldview.[147] Cultivation studies may explain the reasons for the high level of PTSD experienced after the WTC attacks for television viewers beyond ground zero who had no meaningful or physical connection to the attacks.[148] The construction of social reality of the September 2001 attacks is based on the perception of the majority of members of society. The psychological and physiological processes of decision making depend on properly weighed information for accuracy.[149] The value in understanding the effect of cultivation on the public perception of threats is argued by Meridith Diane Lett, Andrea Lynn DiPietro, and Danette Ifert Johnson:

> In light of the events of September 11, the issue of television portrayals of violence and effects of such portrayals on viewers' perceptions becomes especially salient. The news broadcasts of crashing airliners and victims running for their lives as the World Trade Center crumbled down have left many Americans fearful of violence yet to come. These horrific images can have a detrimental effect by influencing peoples' perceptions of the United States' relationship with the international community. Effects such as animosity towards foreigners, fear of flying, or general fear of day-to-day survival, which have occurred at previous points in U.S. history (e.g. World War II, Cold War), may develop in viewers' minds.[150]

---

[145] William A. Gamson et al., "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality," *Annual Review of Sociology* 18, no. 1 (1992): 374.

[146] James Shanahan and Michael Morgan, "Adolescents, Families and Television in Five Countries: Implications for Cross-Cultural Educational Research," *Journal of Educational Television* 18, no. 1 (1992): 1, in Meridith Diane Lett, Andrea Lynn DiPietro, and Danette Ifert Johnson, "Examining Effects of Television News Violence on College Students Through Cultivation Theory," *Communication Research Reports* 21, no. 1 (2004): 40.

[147] Ibid.

[148] McDermott and Zimbardo, "The Psychological Consequences of Terrorist Alerts," 362–363.

[149] Michael A. Shapiro and Annie Lang, "Making Television Reality Unconscious Processes in the Construction of Social Reality," *Communication Research* 18, no. 5 (1991): 685–705.

[150] Meridith Diane Lett et al., "Examining Effects of Television News Violence on College Students Through Cultivation Theory," *Communication Research Reports* 21, no. 1 (2004): 40.

The effect of horrendously captivating images of the surprise attacks are referred to as triggering or "focusing events." Focusing events are sudden, unpredictable, harmful events that bring attention to issues and have the potential to be the catalyst that drives the public policy-making process.[151] Research related to American politics, media, and construction of reality encompasses three main concepts: agenda setting, priming, and framing. Agenda setting is relevant to this study because it is "the process by which information is prioritized for action, and attention allocated to some problems rather than others,"[152] The ability of elites to influence agendas through the use of rhetoric and symbols that keep issues off the agenda is documented in studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s.[153] The strategic use of knowledge and meaning through rhetoric and symbols in the policy-making process reinforces the power position of elites.[154] Leaders use agenda setting to focus public attention and guide opinions on specific issues, while negating others, in an effort to gain support for preferred policies.[155]

[151] Thomas A. Birkland, *After Disaster: Agenda Setting, Public Policy, and Focusing Events* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1997), 1.

[152] Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner, *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), xiii–ix.

[153] Frank R. Baumgartner, and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 44.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Dietram A. Scheufele, "Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication," *Mass Communication & Society* 3, no. 2–3 (2000): 304.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. POSITIONING ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

The study investigates the discourse that circulated the narrative of September 11 to the nation and international community. The material chosen for analysis is limited to remarks and speeches made by political elites in the first hours, days, and weeks after the attacks. The data chosen for analysis is intended to expose the characteristics of the speech acts and rhetorical practices in play post- September 11. The choice of positioning and securitization theory offers a unique approach to revealing how the meaning of the attacks was provided to the nation and why the narrative was accepted with little debate or dissent. The timeframe of September 11 through September 20 is examined because the narrative of and response to September 11 is established in these earliest remarks and demonstrates the power of rhetoric in shaping reality, behavior, and action.

Discourse analysis focuses on the power of language in the construction of meaning in human interaction. The goal of this discourse analysis is to reveal the processes and practices at work in political rhetoric surrounding the events of September 11. The frameworks of positioning and securitization theories are used to discern how public perception of the terrorist attacks was produced and the positions taken up or assigned in the process of sense-making.[156] Discourse analysis seeks to ascertain how words create social reality and expose the rhetoric devices of social influence and control. Positioning theory assists with revealing rhetoric that blocked dissent and discouraged opposing narratives during the period under investigation. Securitization analysis explores how a state of exceptionalism was created through the use of political rhetoric. Securitization argues that security issues are discursively constructed through the articulation of an existential threat of terrorism. The inflation of the threat is revealed in the analysis of the discourse using positioning theory to show how group identity and sense of belonging are used to position the national audience and limit what constitutes appropriate behaviors and reactions based on how the audience was persuaded to think

[156] Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 44.

about the terrorist attacks and the options for response. Securitization urges the implementation of emergency measures articulated in speech acts with limited public assessment of the wider implications of measures that impact civil liberties and actual long-term security.

Rhetoric that persuaded or manipulated a sense of patriotism and strong nationalistic response in a large portion of the American public is dissected. Positioning and securitization theories examine the selected speech acts employed to move security concerns from the realm of public discourse in which preferred policy objectives might be challenge or deterred. By placing securitization theory in relation to positioning theory, the analysis can elaborate on the components that utilized rhetorical practices to securitize the security threat posed by terrorism. This analysis examines the relationship between rhetoric and the creation of the September 11 narrative. The study draws on positioning and securitization theories to produce an analytic model that examines the narrative and positioning employed in response to the attacks. Positioning and securitization theories embrace the role of speech acts in the construction of threat inflation, national security, and public fear, and the ensuing policies and laws. The proposed approach is a more robust analytical tool for investigating the research question, than either one alone.

In the next two chapters, the study conducts the analysis of political rhetoric through the integration of positioning and securitization theories to produce a framework capable of providing insightful analysis. Chapter IV undertakes an analysis of political remarks and speeches by the administration in response to the September 2001 attacks using positioning theory. Positioning theory brings to light the positions taken up, rejected, and/or available to actors involved in the discourse. Chapter V analyses selected data through the use of securitization theory. The selection of securitization theory is based on the central concept of the politics of security as socially constructed through language. Securitization theory is utilized as an analytical framework through which the examination of America's counterterrorism efforts in response to the September 2001 attacks is undertaken.

B. SELECTION OF DOCUMENTS

This chapter examines the rhetoric of political leaders during a time of national fear in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and WTC. The primary actors in the world of politics include the President of the United States and elite cabinet officials. The term *administration* is used throughout this thesis to refer to the president and elite cabinet members who publicly reinforce the constructed narrative.

The position of president imbues its inhabitant with considerable authority as the foremost speaker and decision maker on foreign policy.[157] Status as commander-in-chief of the military of the world's only superpower gives American presidential speech acts illocutionary force unmatched by any other leader. Utilizing these positions of authority during crisis communication provides the president with the opportunity to shape public perception and expectations in times of uncertainty. The rhetorical choices of these leaders (the administration) were integral in delimiting the storyline that contributed significantly to the construction of the American public's reality of the time period examined.

The parameters of time and speaker were employed to select the primary set of artifacts for the analysis. The speeches and statements chosen are the earliest responses to the events of September 11 by the administration, beginning on the day of the terrorist attacks through the September 20, 2001, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress. This thesis employs a data set largely derived from presidential remarks in response to the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and WTC. The principal documents, chosen for content analysis, are supplemented by the inclusion of remarks by administration officials, during the same time period, that reinforce and reiterate the constructed narrative, and in essence, become message force multipliers. These artifacts include nationally televised speeches, as well as remarks made when public attention and media focus were, for all intents and purposes, exclusively on the crisis facing the nation. This data set is readily accessible for future study, which makes them appropriate for

[157] Joseph S. Tuman, *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 110.

examining the role of political rhetorical techniques that influence public perception of the terrorism threat.

The primary documents analyzed are three presidential remarks to the nation on September 11, 2001—Media Center at Emma Booker Elementary School, Sarasota, Florida, Barksdale Airforce Base, Louisiana, and the White House Oval Office—and the September 20, 2001, Presidential Address before the Joint Session of Congress. Additional text from the administration include public addresses made about September 11, 2001, by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Attorney General Ashcroft, and Secretary of State Colin Powell, Attorney General John Ashcroft, are included to support the findings and conclusions in subsequent chapters. Table 1 provides date, speaker, descriptive title, and assigned designation for each document utilized in the analysis.

Table 1. Primary Documents (PD) Selected for Analysis

Date	Speaker	Title	Designation
September 11, 2001 0930 hours	President G. W. Bush	Remarks on the Terrorist Attack on New York City's World Trade Center Emma Booker Elementary School, Sarasota, FL http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	PD1
September 11, 2001 1430 hours	President G. W. Bush	Remarks upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base Barksdale AFB, LA http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	PD2
September 11, 2001 2030 hours	President G. W. Bush	Address to the Nation on the September 11 Attacks The Oval Office, Washington, DC http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	PD3
September 20, 2001 2100 hours	President G. W. Bush	Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress U.S. Capitol Washington, DC http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	PD4

Table 2. Supplemental Documents (SD) Selected for Analysis

Date	Speaker	Title	Designation
September 11, 2001 1842 hours	Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld	DOD News Briefing on Pentagon Attack Pentagon Briefing Room, Arlington, VA Despite damage to the building. http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranriptID=1613	SD1
September 11, 2001 1915 hours	Attorney General John Ashcroft	Press Briefing by Attorney General John Ashcroft, with Secretary of HHS, Secretary of Transportation, and FEMA Director http://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/2001/agcrisisremarks htm	SD2
September 11, 2001	Secretary of State Colin L. Powell	Press Briefing on Board Plane En Route Washington, DC Washington, DC file:///C:/Users/chdsstudent/Downloads/nps49-060311-04%20(2).pdf	SD3
September 12, 2001 1053 hours	President G. W. Bush	Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team The Cabinet Room, White House http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	SD4
September 12, 2001 1753 hours	President G. W. Bush	Remarks While Touring Damage at the Pentagon The Pentagon, Arlington, VA http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources	SD5

This chapter uses positioning theory to analyze the position taken up by the Bush administration and the positions available to those outside the administration, specifically the American public, political opponents, terrorist organizations, and the international community. The goal in analyzing leadership rhetoric is to highlight the power of positioning of the speaker and public through speech acts, and the illocutionary or social forces that shaped public perception of external security threats. The impact of the rhetorical choices of the administration, as viewed through positioning analysis, provide an atypical way of viewing how events of significance were framed and policy implemented based on the framework utilized.

Rhetorical critic David Zarefsky advances the concept that presidential rhetoric has the power to define political and social reality.[158] The ability of the president to make his perspective the national perspective is accomplished by shaping the meaning of situations and by naming the crisis.[159] Thus, the idea is reinforced that the construction of social reality is within the purview of the position available only to the president. Presidential rhetoric can assign rights and duties, and minimize available positions of opposition. In this regard, the ability of the administration to frame the events and construct the storyline and meaning for the American public limits avenues of dissent, debate, and counter narratives.

C. RANGE OF OPTIONS

The Bush administration used the power of presidential rhetoric to advance the claim of self-defense and justify the use of force in response to the terrorist attacks. One finding presented in the 9/11 Commission Report points out that failure to recognize other options, such as diplomacy, law enforcement, and international relationships, leave the nation vulnerable to further attacks.[160] The administration's decision to place the nation on a war footing should be assessed against the range of options available in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Options include approaching the response from the law enforcement, diplomacy, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) perspective.

In his earliest speech acts, President Bush refers to the possibility of a law enforcement approach to the attacks. A law enforcement frame relies on the minimal use of force, and due process—criminal investigation, arrest, and trial proceeding—to maintain public order and achieve justice against the offenders and co-conspirators. This approach was successful used by the Clinton administration in the wake of the 1993 WTC bombing that killed six. President Clinton provided the nation with a reassuring message on the security of Americans at home while law enforcement—the FBI and the

---

158 Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," 611.

159 Ibid.

160 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 363–4.

New York Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF)—spearheaded the criminal investigation to the bombing that eventually lead to the arrest and conviction of six offenders.

Another alternative to the use of force is public diplomacy. Diplomacy is described as "the art of resolving international difficulties peacefully."[161] The 9/11 Commission Report recommends a strategy of public diplomacy in which "the U.S. government must define what the message is, [and] what it stands for."[162] Diplomacy, a soft power, as opposed to hard power, relies on building relations. America's fight for the hearts and minds of the foreign public is waged through better understanding of America's "ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies."[163] Diplomacy is often accompanied by foreign and humanitarian aid packages. Good will efforts, as in the rebuilding of Iraqi schools and the country's infrastructure, enhance the foreign public perception of America. Soft power tools of diplomacy and good will require cooperating with allies and the international community, respecting the role of other nations and their legal processes.[164] The use of diplomatic means in conjunction with economic sanctions and political pressure from UN member nations in gaining the cooperation of the Taliban in turning over bin Laden, or at least expelling them from their safe havens in Afghanistan, was an alternative to war worth considering.

Allowing the ICC to address the terrorist attacks under its authority to prosecute serious criminal violations—genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression—of international concern was another possibility.[165] In the context of September 11, international cooperation, similar to building the "coalition of the willing" for war, demonstrates consideration for international public opinion and the

---

[161] Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy Soft Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 9.

[162] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 376.

[163] Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 3.

[164] Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Benefits of Soft Power," *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge* 2 (2004): 3.

[165] Vincent-Joel Proulx, "Rethinking the Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the Post-September 11th Era: Should Acts of Terrorism Qualify as Crimes against Humanity," *Am. U. Int'l L. Rev.* 19 (2003): 1019.

adverse impact of military action. The fact that the perpetrators were non-states actors magnified the need to respect the sovereignty of foreign nations while pursuing justice. While the international community condemned the terrorist attacks, considerable concern existed about America's ability to react with restraint and proportional force.[166] The aftermath of September 11 was an opportunity for the United States to demonstrate its respect for international community support and reconsider its rejection of the Rome Statute that authorizes the ICC to adjudicate criminal cases on the international level.[167]

Alternatives to responding to the attacks on September 11, with military force include law enforcement, diplomacy, and the ICC approach. Criminal investigations and diplomacy are slow moving compared to swift military action; however, the possible options open to the administration ran the spectrum from soft to hard power. A persuasively articulated narrative, that embraced consideration of alternatives to military force, could position the American public to accept the terrorist attacks from the perspective of law enforcement, diplomacy, or the ICC.

D. POSITIONING ANALYSIS

Rhetoric can assign rights and duties, as well as minimize available positions of opposition. In this regard, the ability of the administration to frame the events and construct the storyline and meaning for the American public limits avenues of dissent, debate, and counter narratives. Through the lens of positioning theory, the author examines positions, story lines, speech acts, and illocutionary force of the administration's meaning making in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

---

[166] Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Security* 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001/2002): 61.

[167] Proulx, "Rethinking the Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the Post-September 11th Era: Should Acts of Terrorism Qualify as Crimes against Humanity," 1011.

1. President Remarks to the Nation on September 11, 2001: Sarasota, Florida—Elementary School

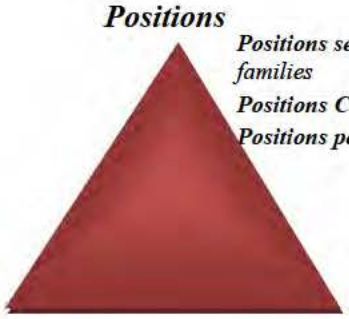

Figure 2. President's Remarks on the Terrorist Attack from Sarasota, Florida September 11, 2001

The president's initial response to the events on September 11 is subdued and the language relatively neutral. The description of the attacks as a "national tragedy" invites the country to unite and identify with the communities directly impacted. In terms of SIT, the remarks can be seen as rhetorically positioning the public in a shared "tragedy," which can assist in establishing a sense of national identity.

> Ladies and gentlemen, this is a difficult moment for America. … Today we've had a national tragedy. Two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our country.

The words he uses to describe the attacks, which are still unfolding, is consistent with the idea of this event as a criminal act that falls within the purview of justice and law enforcement, similar to the handling of the prior attack on the WTC.

> I have spoken to the Vice President, to the Governor of New York, to the Director of the FBI, and have ordered that the full resources of the Federal Government go to help the victims and their families and to conduct a full-scale investigation to hunt down and to find those folks who committed this act.

Attorney General Ashcroft uses similar law enforcement centric rhetoric when he describes the effort the government is prepared to expend "to bring the people

responsible for these acts, these crimes, to justice."[168] Additionally, Ashcroft continues the theme of unity when he states it is "time for us to come together as a nation."[169] He reiterates the goal of unifying the American public by reminding the audience that many of people have "been changed forever by this horrible tragedy.[170] In these early remarks, Americans as a whole are positioned as victims, and prayer and blessings are requested. The call for unity is framed as a duty to support one another during these uncertain and tragic times. Unity requires acceptance of the national (group) identity as Americans and according to Moghaddam, "Group membership has an important impact on how we think and act toward ourselves, toward *ingroup* members (those who share our group membership) and toward *outgroup* members (those who belong to a group to which we do not belong)."[171] [Emphasis in original].

The perpetrators are referred to as folks, a very casual choice that suggests the initial remarks were not well thought out. However, these descriptions are modified as the administration's rhetoric begins to expand the narrative to consider options beyond the criminal frame, as can be seen in the analysis of the subsequent remarks that follow.

2. President Remarks to the Nation on September 11, 2001—Barksdale Airforce Base

Almost immediately, the force of the speech acts changes from the morning address, in which the day's events are defined as "apparent terrorist attack" without positioning signifiers, to a storyline that identifies the referent object, begins the othering process, and group identity construction:

> Freedom, itself, was attacked this morning by a faceless coward, and freedom will be defended.

Othering occurs in the narrative of social and political identities because:

---

168 "Remarks of Attorney General John Ashcroft, September 11, 2001," accessed September 14, 2014, http://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/2001/agcrisisremarks htm.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008), 4.

> …one identity cannot be defined in isolation: the only way to circumscribe an identity is by contrasting it against other identities. Consequently, identity is an ambiguous notion. It gets its meaning from what it is not, from the Other: like a word in a cross-word puzzle, it is located in a place where uniqueness, defined in a negative way (one's identity implies that one is different from the Others), meets a sameness which needs an 'elseness' to exist (to get an identity one must be perceived as identical to or to identify with someone else).[172]

In this case, the speech act positions the outgroup as attacking freedom and the ingroup as the defenders of freedom. The outgroup is constructed as perpetrators of cowardly acts in contrast to the ingroup as champions of a worthy cause. The SIT tenet, *identity motivation*, is expressed in minimal group paradigm research that shows "merely categorizing people as belonging to one group or another produced social comparison with other groups and that in turn led to group-oriented behavior patterns, especially forms of discrimination in favor of ingroups and against outgroups."[173] Social categorization, that can arouse strong nationalist sentiment, is followed by a subtle move away from the justice and law enforcement perspective:

> Make no mistake: The United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts.

While the discourse does not define the attacks as acts of war, the narrative leaves open the possibility of several options for framing the events. As in his earlier remarks, the president again positions citizens as victims and assigns himself the duty and right to comfort and provide protection:

> I want to reassure the American people that the full resources of the Federal Government are working to assist local authorities to save lives and to help the victims of these attacks.
>
> I've been in regular contact with the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, the national security team, and my Cabinet. We have taken all appropriate security precautions to protect the American people. Our military at home and around the world is on high alert status, and we have

[172] Denis-Constant Martin, "The Choices of Identity," *Social Identities* 1, no. 1 (1995): 5.

[173] Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism," 17.

> taken the necessary security precautions to continue the functions of your Government.
>
> We have been in touch with the leaders of Congress and with world leaders to assure them that we will do whatever is necessary to protect America and Americans.

The president does make a distinction between the general public (victims) and rescue workers (heroes) at the attack sites when he expresses his "thanks for all the folks who have been fighting hard to rescue our fellow citizens and to join me in saying a prayer for the victims and their families." This distinction can actually undermine the call for unity and group cohesion if some Americans are perceived as helpless victims and in need of protection, assistance, and prayer. The rhetorical choice of "our fellow citizens" reminds the public that the president is also a member of the community of U.S. citizens.

The narrative then turns into attacks on freedom, which will become a familiar refrain in future administration discourse. The call for justice turned to a "hunt;" the "folks" are now "cowards." The American people are still positioned as victims yet the narrative defines the attacks as a challenge that the United States must rise to and overcome:

> The resolve of our great Nation is being tested. But make no mistake: We will show the world that we will pass this test. God bless.

The narrative constructs a population united in the face of a national tragedy. The rhetoric builds on the SIT tenet, *centrality of social identity*, which "postulates that the need for a positive and distinct identity, will lead individuals to want to belong to groups…"[174] Thus, with the belief that the prior positioning as vulnerable victims has achieved its purpose in building unity and national identity, the victim position falls away as the rhetoric takes on a war metaphor; with the strategic positioning of the perpetrators as terrorists and the attacks as acts of war begin to permeate the narrative. The technique of strategic positioning places the ingroup on moral high ground, restricts storylines

[174] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 95.

available to the outgroup, and pre-construes the meaning of what the outgroup says or does within the constructed narrative.[175]

3. President Remarks to the Nation on September 11, 2001—The White House Oval Office

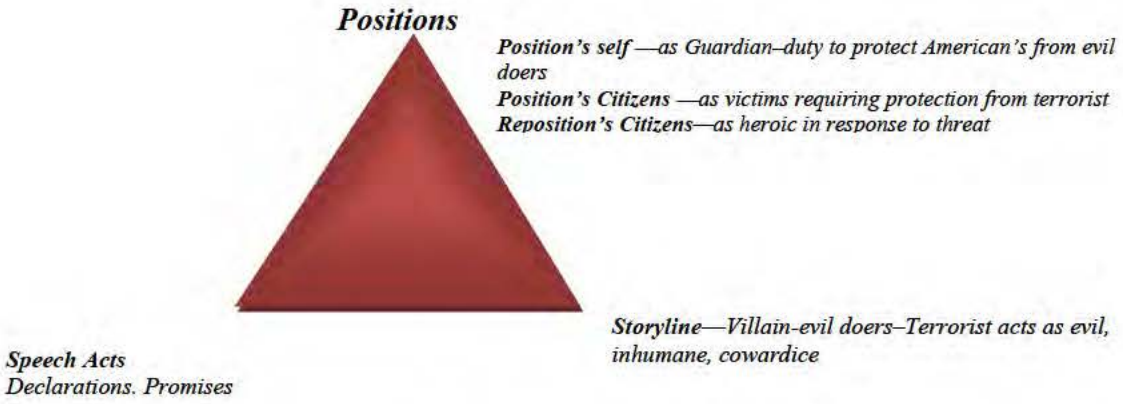

Figure 3. September 11, 2001: President's Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks on September 11

The setting, the Oval Office, underscores the position of power embodied in the presidency. The president takes up the position as the person with the right to define the events of the day. Again, the referent objects under attack are clearly defined ("freedom" and "our way of life") and the intentions of the perpetrators ("to frighten") and their culpable state of mind ("deliberate") are ascribed. The description of the victims in familiar roles and activities, and for which people can easily access a mental image of the common hardworking American, engenders empathy from the audience.

> Good evening. Today our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes or in their offices: secretaries, business men and women, military and Federal workers, moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror.

---

[175] Harré and Moghaddam, ed., *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts*, 129.

Bush employs Aristotle's epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric to unify the nation and amplify its virtues.[176] Epideictic rhetoric assigns praise or blame, and "…seeks to convey certain political values and beliefs, to construct common characteristics and identities and to create consensus and a spirit of community, which in turn is intended to serve as a model for the future political actions of the addressees."[177] He builds on this sense of community when he positions the American public as blameless victims and the terrorist as evil doers. This positioning invites public assessment of *social identity through social comparisons*, a basic SIT tenet, which encourages the understanding of people's own situation—as individuals and members of groups—through comparison with others.[178]

The use of a vivid visual account of the events likely leads the audience to use emotional reasoning as they make comparisons and evaluate the message.

> The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing, have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our Nation into chaos and retreat, but they have failed. Our country is strong.

The narrative elevates the attacks to "mass murder." While the attacks can still be consider criminal, albeit heinous, based on the word choice (mass murder), the earlier perception of being a law enforcement investigation has shifted. The president reminds the audience about the series of emotions he has experienced along with them. This reminder demonstrates the president's emotional connection to the audience, which makes it easier to accept his positioning of the public as angry and the country as strong.

> A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

---

[176] Murphy, ""Our Mission and Our Moment:" George W. Bush and September 11th," 609.

[177] Ruth Wodak and Rudolf De Cillia, "Commemorating the Past: The Discursive Construction of Official Narratives about theRebirth of the Second Austrian Republic," *Discourse & Communication* 1, no. 3 (2007): 324–325.

[178] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 96.

> America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.

The president's characterization of the attacks as stemming from ideological hatred, rather than any U.S. foreign policy practices, positions this "great nation" as innocent in contrast to the attackers. This narrative of blamelessness is reiterated in the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS). This early determination that "freedom and opportunity" are motivation for the attacks diminishes the opportunity for political debate and emergence of alternative narratives on the meaning of the attacks, which leaves the administration's construction of reality as the definitive narrative.

In providing an explanation for the attacks (U.S. freedom and opportunity), the president uses language that positions America in relation to the rest of the world, and the United States as "the brightest beacon." is deemed superior. This explanation is the beginning of the "us versus them" polarizing rhetoric that shapes public perception of the terrorists and the U.S. dichotomy.

> Today our Nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America, with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could.

The president repositions the victims and Americans in general as heroic. He describes the acts of daring rescuers, caring strangers, and donating neighbors as the best, in stark contrast to the worst, in human nature. This rhetoric continues the polarization discourse of good versus evil with clear distinctions made between "us and them." Yet, the rhetoric seems to move the nation back and forth to be positioned as heroic and then victimized. This back and forth is seen in the following text in which the audience is reminded about the uncertainty and the need for government intervention and protection:

> Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our Government's emergency response plans. Our military is powerful, and it's prepared. Our emergency teams are working in New York City and Washington, DC, to help with local rescue efforts.

> Our first priority is to get help to those who have been injured and to take every precaution to protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks.
>
> The functions of our Government continue without interruption. Federal agencies in Washington which had to be evacuated today are reopening for essential personnel tonight and will be open for business tomorrow. Our financial institutions remain strong, and the American economy will be open for business, as well.

The aforementioned quotes show U.S. strength, reminds the public that the president is in control, and the country has the ability to absorb the attacks and continue to function. This show of strength is done to allay fears that the attacks were an existential threat. The president invokes his duty to protect the nation. He continues to outline the plan of action to address the security threat and define the role of the military in recovering from the attacks. Bush is demonstrating his authority as commander-in-chief and American resiliency to the world.

> The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.

The focus of the speech shifts to address the international audience by acknowledging "the many world leaders who have called to offer their condolences and assistance." The president speaks of a collective threat that unites "America and our friends and allies …with all those who want peace and security in the world …together to win the war against terrorism."

The speech continues with the American public once again positioned as victims who are broken, traumatized, and vulnerable in the aftermath of the attacks. He offers comfort through the recitation of a prayer familiar to most Americans:

> Tonight I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. And I pray they will be comforted by a power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: ``Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.''

The president seems to provide a prescription for the sense of uncertainty by reminding the nation that:

> When all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace… America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

According social categorization, the president, like others who possess power can "manufacture and ascribe meaning to intergroup differences in ways that serve their own interests."[179] The objective is to unite the nation further in the defense of common values. He provides reassurance in this nation's history of victory. While he does not name the enemy he is constructing, its status as something other than what is being defended is clear.

4. President's Address on September 20, 2001—Before Joint Session of the Congress of the United States

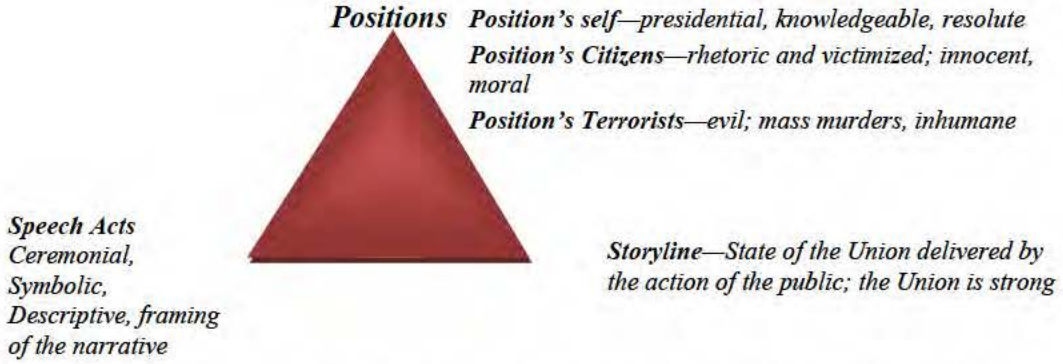

Figure 4. September 20, 2001: President's Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress

The President's first full-length address to the nation was a live primetime broadcast nine days after the terror attacks on September 20, 2001, at a joint session of the Congress. The setting can be described as ceremonial and formal, which emphasizes

[179] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 95.

the power that resides with the position, president of the United States.[180] In this speech, the President repositions the American people as heroic and demonstrates it by noting:

> Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, members of Congress, and fellow Americans:
>
> In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people.

He illustrates the state of the union in the actions of those directly impacted by the attacks:

> We have seen it in the courage of passengers, who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground—passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. And would you please help me to welcome his wife, Lisa Beamer, here tonight.
>
> We have seen the state of our Union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion.

A recurring refrain in the earliest speech acts focuses on unity and is demonstrated in positioning the public as people of virtue who exemplify the state of the union in their actions. These pronouncements provide the public with a positive and distinct identity that the SIT tenet, *identity motivation*, maintains all humans seek.

> We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers—in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.
>
> My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our Union—and it is strong.

Ordinary citizen's actions are then positioned as partners in the process of defining the meaning, and shaping the narrative of September 11 that the president begins to frame in this speech.

The president carefully describes the situation surrounding the events and establishes the next steps for the United States, a nation just starting to come out of a state

[180] Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," 376.

of shock and comprehend the extent of the events of September 11. The president describes the events that transpired and explains the emotional evolution Americans have experienced. While he presents the emotional progression from "grief to resolute" as complete, it is more of a roadmap to resilience for Americans who are likely still dealing with the fear and confusion of the attacks. He attempts to move the public away from emotions that helped unify the nation, yet does not fit within a narrative of strength and heroism.

> Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

Unlike his September 11 addresses, he does not position Americans as frightened, but instead, reveals the path expected of a united heroic citizenry. This positioning is possible because Congress did deliver his request for emergency funding.

> I thank the Congress for its leadership at such an important time. All of America was touched on the evening of the tragedy to see Republicans and Democrats joined together on the steps of this Capitol, singing "God Bless America." And you did more than sing; you acted, by delivering $40 billion to rebuild our communities and meet the needs of our military.
>
> Speaker Hastert, Minority Leader Gephardt, Majority Leader Daschle and Senator Lott, I thank you for your friendship, for your leadership and for your service to our country.

After thanking political elites, and acknowledging international shows of support, and the death toll sustained by nations across the globe in the attacks, he returns to the construction of the September 11 narrative as an attack on the identified referent object, freedom.

> On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars—but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war—but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning.
>
> Americans have known surprise attacks—but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day—and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

The president takes up the position as the authority on what Americans are asking and proceeds to supply answers within the constructed narrative of September 11.[181] Those answers include a synopsis of al Qaeda and their previous activity against nation-states. He uses an analogy to elicit a common pop culture schema that, for most adults, carries meaning and possibly fear.

> Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking:
>
> Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.
>
> Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world—and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.

The president continues to provide the nation with a description of the terrorists and their objective:

> The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics—a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children.

Providing characteristics of the outgroup influences the public process of social comparison between the two groups.[182] He names their leader and proceeds to expand the public perception of the capabilities of the terrorist organization and the potential threat they pose:

> This group and its leader—a person named Osama bin Laden—are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries. They are recruited from their own nations and neighborhoods and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan, where they are trained in the tactics of terror. They are

[181] Murphy, "Our Mission and Our Moment:" George W. Bush and September 11th," 613.

[182] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 96.

> sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction.

He invites the perception of al Qaeda as wielding power in Afghanistan. The president positions the terrorist as an existential threat to the world and holds up Afghanistan as an example of this nation's future:

> The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan, we see al Qaeda's vision for the world.
>
> Afghanistan's people have been brutalized—many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough.

This narrative suggests the terrorists, having succeeded in one part of the world, intend to export their vision to America. Thus, the threat posed by a relatively minor yet occasionally successful fringe group is inflated.

The president moves on to position the Afghanistan leadership as a threat:

> It is not only repressing its own people, it is threatening people everywhere by sponsoring and sheltering and supplying terrorists.

He follows this line of reasoning to conclude that these roles make the regime equivalent to acts of terrorism:

> By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder.

This rhetoric is used to build support for planned military action in Afghanistan. After the president, positioned as the voice of the nation, lays down ultimatums to the Taliban, in reference to al Qaida leaving, two positions are available to the leadership in the "us versus them" rhetoric of polarization.

> And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to

> appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.

After making a distinction between the terrorists and the millions of practicing Muslim worldwide, the president reiterates the name of the enemy and the goal he has set out for addressing the threat this enemy and terrorism in general poses:

> The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.
>
> Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.

As in his prior addresses, the president takes up the position as the authority on what questions American's need answers to, and again proceeds to supply them within the constructed narrative of September 11. He reminds the audience that hatred of democratic values and freedom are the terrorists' motive for the attack. The enemy's goal of ending religious freedom:

> Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa.

The president positions the United States as the oppositional force that stops them from reaching these goals.

> These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way.

The president returns to rhetorical devices that draw out commonly held mental schema that carry meaning for many adults and may elicit a fearful response:

> We are not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions—by abandoning every value except the will to power—they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way, to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.

Having provided the meaning of the threat faced and strategically positioning the terrorists by predefining their storyline within the constructed narrative, the president now moves forward to ask and answer questions he perceives the public would have about a national plan of action. The plan includes:

> Americans are asking: How will we fight and win this war?
>
> We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network.

He prepares the nation for a different type of war that will be long and involve the loss of life in pursuit of a multitude of potential enemy nation-states:

> This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat. Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.
>
> Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans.

> Today, dozens of federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, have responsibilities affecting homeland security.

He introduces the first change in U.S. government structure with "the creation of a Cabinet-level position reporting directly to me, the Office of Homeland Security." He informs the audience that this realignment will "strengthen American security… and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to safeguard our country against terrorism and respond to any attacks that may come." This realignment supports the premise that the earlier positioning was taken up "to create consensus and a spirit of community, which in turn is intended to serve as a model for the future political actions of the addressees."[183]

This next section of the address identifies the referent object as threatened by terrorism:

> These measures are essential. But the only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows.
>
> Many will be involved in this effort, from FBI agents to intelligence operatives to the reservists we have called to active duty. All deserve our thanks, and all have our prayers. And tonight, a few miles from the damaged Pentagon, I have a message for our military: Be ready. I've called the Armed Forces to alert, and there is a reason. The hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud.
>
> We ask every nation to join us. An attack on one is an attack on all.

The president extends the threat response to civilized nations; thereby, inviting the international audience to make an assessment of membership based on "shared category characteristics" with Americans, such as common values and the collective fight against terrorism.[184] Intragroup relations are usually characterized by:

> (1) the perceived similarity of group members (2) mutual attraction between members or social cohesion (3) mutual esteem, (4) Emotional

[183] Perelman, "Das Reich der Rhetorik: Rhetorik und Argumentation," 71.

[184] Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, 28.

> empathy or contagion, (5) altruism and cooperation, and (6) attitudinal and behavioural uniformity.[185]

The international audience is now included in the fight for freedom when it is described as:

> This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.
>
> We ask every nation to join us. We will ask, and we will need, the help of police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world.

In addition, it reflects on the role of the NATO charter to position other nations with the duty to stand with the United States:

> Perhaps the NATO Charter reflects best the attitude of the world:
>
> An attack on one is an attack on all. The civilized world is rallying to America's side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror, unanswered, can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments. And you know what—we're not going to allow it.

The president returns to the tactic of posing questions Americans should be asking and providing answers that again inflate the nature of the threat and directs the audiences' attention on the children. This rhetorical strategy reminds the nation that the sacrifices expected are made to ensure the future of the children:

> Americans are asking: What is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat.
>
> I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them.

He continues to position the public with duties as Americans and to fellow members of the ingroup:

---

[185] Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, 29.

> Terrorists attacked a symbol of American prosperity. They did not touch its source. America is successful because of the hard work, and creativity, and enterprise of our people. These were the true strengths of our economy before September 11th, and they are our strengths today.
>
> And, finally, please continue praying for the victims of terror and their families, for those in uniform, and for our great country.
>
> Prayer has comforted us in sorrow, and will help strengthen us for the journey ahead.

The president positions the members of Congress as willing actors by thanking them in advance of action he will require of them:

> Tonight I thank my fellow Americans for what you have already done and for what you will do. And ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, I thank you, their representatives, for what you have already done and for what we will do together.

The president continues to outline a plan to address the threat:

> Tonight, we face new and sudden national challenges. We will come together to improve air safety, to dramatically expand the number of air marshals on domestic flights, and take new measures to prevent hijacking. We will come together to promote stability and keep our airlines flying, with direct assistance during this emergency. We will come together to give law enforcement the additional tools it needs to track down terror here at home. We will come together to strengthen our intelligence capabilities to know the plans of terrorists before they act, and find them before they strike. We will come together to take active steps that strengthen America's economy, and put our people back to work.

The threat is described as existential in nature and the president talks about fear in an effort to dismiss its ability to take hold. He defines the times, the mission, the goal, and the outcome:

> After all that has just passed—all the lives taken, and all the possibilities and hopes that died with them—it is natural to wonder if America's future is one of fear. Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead, and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world.

The narrative addresses the events as a tragedy and notes the loss, which leads to the question of fear. Appropriately, the president acknowledges the ability to define the times, which rhetorically he attempts to do by constructing political and social reality for the audience. The discourse takes the listener from reminders of tragedy to predictions of triumph:

> Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom—the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time—now depends on us. Our nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.

The president introduces the concept of freedom and fear as diametrically opposed. The nation cannot embrace both fear and freedom. He positions "this generation" with the duty to face the threat with courage. The SIT tenet, availability of cognitive alternatives, usually refers to "group members who are dissatisfied with their social identity..."[186] In this case, the president mobilizes the nation to reject the status of victims Americans by providing the cognitive alternative of heroic and resolute by moving away from fear and grief toward anger and hope.

The president continues by outlining the purpose and path to overcoming fear and cruelty on behalf of the freedom and justice—binary opposites—for the nation:

> I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.
>
> The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.
>
> Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice—assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.

[186] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 97.

This speech reiterates much of the rhetoric heard from the administration in earlier remarks on September 11; the description of the attacks as declarations of war, this nation as strong freedom loving… "a great people moved to defend it," "the worst kind of evil" we respond "with the best of America." The narrative makes frequent reference to an American way of life that positions the United States as unique among nations and builds on the "us versus them' polarizing rhetoric.

E. POSITIONING FOR THE USE OF FORCE

Force came in the form of military action sanctioned by language in United Nations (UN) Charter. Article 51 of the UN charter provides the "inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations…"[187] The administration's decision to response to the terrorist attacks with military action required rhetoric that justified the use of force. Rhetorical techniques employed include SIT tenets that led to social categorization that can elicit a strong sense of national identity, as well as positioning that embraced othering and group identity construction. Polarization, artificial dichotomies, and binary discourse are rhetorical devices utilized by the administration to construct an either/or worldview in defense of the use of force. Rhetoric that claimed "freedom and opportunity" were the impetus behind the terrorist attacks that diminished the space for dissent and positioned America blameless and superior to the rest of the world. The ability to limit alternative narratives on the meaning of the attacks also worked to reduce the range of viable options from which to select an appropriate response.

The policy of military action and preemptive strikes that launched the United States into the war on terror (WOT) is consistent with the constructed narrative of September 11. The administration's pronouncement of the terrorist attacks as acts of war and preference for hard power led to a cycle of violence in the effort to eradicate terrorism. Hard power is characterized as "the ability purposefully to inflict pain or to

187 "Charter of The United Nations: Statute of the International Court of Justice Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression. Article 51," accessed November 26, 2014, http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml.

reward in the pursuit of influence, it is convenient and plausible to identify it with military and economic instruments of policy."[188]

F. SUMMARY

Discourse analysis of the earliest rhetorical responses to the terrorist attacks on September 11, using positioning theory, supports the hypothesis that meaning was politically constructed through the rhetorical choices of the administration. Positioning analysis reveals the way rights and duties are ascribed, attributed, and justified by the administration.[189] Positions taken up by the speakers delimit available positions for the audience and perpetrators, as well as the corresponding rights and assigned duties. The speeches analyzed employ an array of rhetoric techniques that contain emotional language, including fear rhetoric, polarizing discourse, and epideictic oratory.

Positioning analysis revealed the use of emotional language as a means to construct the threat, shape public reaction, and increase support for future actions and political agenda. Teun A. Van Dijk notes, "the most striking recent example is the manipulation of U.S. and world opinion about terrorism after 9/11, in which very emotional and strongly opinionated mental models held by citizens about this event were generalized to more general, shared fears, attitudes and ideologies about terrorism and related issues."[190] Through the use of emotional words, specifically fear and anger, the public was primed to accept the administration's politically constructed narrative and influence to support proposed policies.

Polarizing discourse was employed to present the American public in positive identity terms—*innocent, heroic, moral, freedom-loving*—position them with duties—*to unite, remain steadfast, and resolute*—and ascribed them with the rights—*freedom, democracy, civilized way of life*—while simultaneously attributing to the enemy

---

[188] Colin S. Gray, *Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force As an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 28.

[189] Moghaddam and Harré, *Words of Conflict, Words of War: How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting*, 8.

[190] Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," 370.

characteristics—*evil, cowardly, immoral, mass murders*—that are diametrically opposite. The nation is positioned as good, the enemy as evil.

The goal of epideictic or ceremonial oratory is to persuade and transform the audience toward the actor's political agenda. Communication professors, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, contend, "presidents have the opportunity to persuade us to conceive of ourselves in ways compatible with their views of government and the world. At the same time, presidents invite us to see them, the presidency, the country, and the country's role in specific ways."[191] Epideictic language attempts to provide the listener with a positive identity through the assignment of praiseworthy attributes. Bush encouraged the American public to see themselves as steadfast and resolute in the face of uncertainty and fear.

The rhetorical choices made strategically position the terrorists, and limit their capacity to present a storyline, which is contrary to the administration's narrative of September 11. The ability of the administration to ascribe the symbolic meaning behind the terrorist attacks and characterize the intentions and goals of the terrorists, secured the moral high ground for the nation. It also placed the terrorists at a disadvantage by reducing available positions and restricting their speech acts to the pre-interpreted story line.[192]

The use of rhetorical choices that work to influence audiences toward unity and group identification, construct social and political identity, and foster negative outgroup characteristics, embrace SIT principles that account for intergroup relations. Four of the five SIT tenets, identity motivation, centrality of social identity, assessing social identity through social comparisons, and availability of cognitive alternatives, are identified through the positioning analysis undertaken.[193]

---

[191] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 5–6.

[192] Harré and Moghaddam, ed., *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts*, 129.

[193] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 94–97. The last SIT tenet is strategies for improving social identity.

In the next chapter, the analysis moves from the positioning theory framework to look at the process of securitization of the terrorist attacks and terrorism as an existential threat to the United States through the CS securitization theory analysis of the administration's rhetorical choices.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

V. SECURITIZATION ANALYSIS

A. COPENHAGEN SCHOOL—SECURITIZATION

The concept of security as socially constructed through discourse is analyzed by examining speech acts and their illocutionary force to understand the goal of policy makers and the justifications put forth to move an issue to a state of securitization. The previous chapter looked at the political rhetoric in the initial days after the September 2001 terror attacks through the lens of positioning theory. The analysis of speech acts within the framework of rights, duties, and positions was employed to understand the positions taken up and/or assigned to influence public perception about security threats, terrorists, and terrorism in general. The discourse that followed the attacks can be further analyzed through the CS securitization theory.

In this chapter, securitization theory is employed to broaden understanding of the rhetorical devices used by the Bush administration to bypass normal political processes and address the September 2001 terror attacks through politics of exceptionalism. Exceptionalism refers to conditions under which "security policy can intensely sustain the justification and institutionalization of exceptional policies and emergency measures that hollow out central characteristics of liberal democratic government."[194] According to Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde, securitization, unlike politicization, "presents an issue as urgent and existential, as so important that it should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues."[195] For threats and vulnerabilities to be defined as security issues, "they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political. They have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind."[196]

---

[194] Huysmans, "Minding Exceptions: The Politics of Insecurity and Liberal Democracy," 324.

[195] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 29.

[196] Ibid., 5.

The speech-act approach to security studies consists of three units of analysis: referent objects, securitizing actors, and functional actors. While functional actors can exert influence in the security process, this thesis examines only the first two units. This analysis is based on Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde's description of the first two units as "the most important," and the subsequent determination that the time commitment needed to detect functional actors for analysis was not warranted.[197] The discourse is analyzed for threat inflation by examining the roles of the referent object, the securitizing actor, and the audience.

1. Referent Objects

The referent objects are the subject of the securitization process, and are defined as "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival."[198] Traditionally, the referent object for security has been sovereignty of a state or, in the case of a nation, its identity.[199] The referent objects identified in the September 11 discourse were "freedom," "democracy," "civilization," and "our way of life." Speech acts signifying the referent objects are noted in the earliest remarks made by members of the administration after the terrorist attacks.

In his first opportunity to communicate the narrative after the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, President Bush unambiguously names the referent object when he stated, "*Freedom*, itself, was attacked this morning by a faceless coward, and *freedom* will be defended."[200] This address was made in the early afternoon on the day of the attacks.

Attorney General John Ashcroft continued the securitization process of the terror attacks by proclaiming, "they are an assault on the security and the *freedom* of every American citizen."[201] Like the president, Ashcroft clearly identified for the audience

---

[197] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 42.

[198] Ibid., 36.

[199] Ibid.

[200] George W. Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base" (speech, Barksdale Air Force Base, September 11, 2001).

[201] "Remarks of Attorney General John Ashcroft, September 11, 2001."

what the terrorists threatened. President Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office on the evening of the attacks and set the securitization process in full motion:

> Good evening. Today, our fellow citizens, *our way of life*, our very *freedom* came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.[202]

This statement is the first instance in which the phrase "our way of life" is spoken. The illocutionary force of this speech act signifies which referent objects are threatened, and moves the securitization process forward:

> America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for *freedom* and opportunity in the world. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.[203]
>
> …we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.[204]
>
> In remarks on September 12, the president reiterated these referent objects:
>
> *Freedom* and *democracy* are under attack. This enemy attacked not just our people, but all *freedom-loving* people everywhere in the world. But we will not allow this enemy to win the war by changing *our way of life* or restricting our *freedoms*. The *freedom-loving* nations of the world stand by our side.[205]

Transformation of the attacks from a crime or political statement was accomplished with the reiteration of a narrative of exceptionalism, which identified threatened concepts that carried social meaning for the nation. The ability to name the referent object set the conditions needed to move the process of securitization forward. Communications Professor John Murphy asserts that the "rhetorical strategies crafted the authority President George W. Bush needed to dominate public interpretation of the

---

[202] George W. Bush, "President's Address to the Nation" (speech, Washington, DC: The Oval Office, September 20, 2001).

[203] George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on the September 11 Attacks" (speech, Washington, DC: The Oval Office, September 11, 2001).

[204] Ibid.

[205] George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team" (speech, Washington, DC: The Cabinet Room, September 12, 2001).

events of September 11."[206] The securitizing actor was now positioned to articulate the need for emergency policy measures.

2. Securitizing Actors

Securitizing actors are defined as "actors who securitize issues by declaring something—a referent object—existentially threatened."[207] Persons who are legitimately positioned to present an issue to the target audience to gain support, moral and formal, for the securitization process are usually authorized representatives.[208]

In this analysis, President Bush is the primary securitizing actor with members of his administration closely reiterating the constructed narrative. The position of a securitizing actor fits well with the observation that "the group mind does not *think* in the strict sense of the word. In place of thoughts it has impulses, habits, and emotions. In making up its mind, its first impulse is usually to follow the example of a trusted leader."[209] In this case, the president filled the void with meaning early by identifying the terrorist attacks as an existential threat to American values. The political rhetoric consistently elicits visual recollections of the tragic events and corresponding emotions. The administration's rhetorical choices attempt to shape support for the sacrifices and challenges the nation would face in the proposed WOT. Without the support of the public and the cooperation of Congress, the goal of implementing significant changes to domestic and foreign policy would remain in the realm of normal politics and might have been slowed down or defeated. The numerous references to security in the speech acts surrounding the events of September 11 demonstrate the securitization process in effect. The rhetoric includes clear indicators of the administration positioning the U.S. public—the audience—with the duty to consent to the proposed security measures.

---

[206] Murphy, "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th," 608.

[207] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 36.

[208] Ibid., 42.

[209] Edward L. Bernays and Mark Crispin Miller, *Propaganda* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 1928), 73.

3. The Audience

In the securitization process, the actor performing the security speech act must convince the general public, elected officials, and other audiences that not only is "something existential threatening a shared value but also that the proposed emergency measures are valid."[210] Securitization is a democratic process that in most circumstances requires political leaders to request and receive consensus from the public on what constitutes a security threat, as well as the method and means to address the threat.[211]

The response by the public legitimized the position of the president as the appropriate securitizing actor after the terror attacks. The speech acts led to a rally-round-the-flag effect and an uptick in the president's popularity indicating that, at least initially, the rhetoric employed was successful in defining the events and gaining approval from the public audience on the existential nature of the threat.[212] According to Jane K. Cramer, in the midst of overwhelming public support for the administration's narrative, "Politicians and the media had sufficient information to counter the administration but did not engage in debate for fear of being labeled 'unpatriotic.'"[213] Thierry Balzacq expands on the CS's definition of audience by identifying two types of support, moral and formal, required by securitizing actors to increase the chances of a successful securitizing process:

> Securitizing agents always strive to convince as broad an audience as possible because they need to maintain a social relationship with the target individual group…Political officials are responsive to the fact that winning formal support while breaking social bonds with constituencies can wreck their credibility. That explains why, while seeking formal

---

[210] Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 31.

[211] Paul Roe, "Actor, Audience (s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 6 (2008): 619.

[212] Chapman and Reiter, "The United Nations Security Council and the rally'round the flag effect," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 894; Mueller. *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 60; Murphy, "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th," 608.

[213] Jane Kellett Cramer, "Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed before the Iraq War," *Security Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 492.

> acquiescence, political officials also cloak security arguments in the semantic repertoire of the national audience in order to win support.[214]

In securitizing the September 11 attacks, the audience consisted of the nation, Congress, terrorists, and the international community. A successful securitization requires reaching a tipping point of audience acceptance of both an existential threat to the referent object and the requirement of security measures beyond the norm.

The president's speech acts were intended to gain moral support from the broadest audience possible and formal support from Congress in the form of emergency funding. The request for formal support from Congress, through funding approval, was presented in a message directed at the larger audience, which included the U.S. general public:

> This morning, I am sending to Congress a request for emergency funding authority, so that we are prepared to spend whatever it takes to rescue victims, to help the citizens of New York City and Washington, D.C., respond to this tragedy, and to protect our national security. I want to thank the members of Congress for their unity and support. America is united. The freedom-loving nations of the world stand by our side. This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil. But good will prevail.[215]

By working to gain moral support from the American public while framing the request as urgent, the president used public support to influence Congress' decision to provide the formal support. In the aftermath of September 11, the administration requested and received legislative changes that enhanced law enforcement's ability to gather intelligence and bolstered the perception of formal support from Congress.[216] The lack of political dissent from the Democratic Party did not mean that the administration received their support. However, when opponents "fail to fulfill their role in the marketplace of ideas, the marketplace will not function."[217]

---

[214] Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 184–185.

[215] Bush, "Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team."

[216] Kam C. Wong, "The Making of the USA Patriot Act I: The Legislative Process and Dynamics," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 34, no. 3 (2006): 194.

[217] Cramer, "Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed before the Iraq War," 492.

The marketplace of ideas maintains that a mature society can appraise policy options when the free expression and exchange of ideas occurs.[218] Audience beliefs and actions should be shaped through debate and evaluation of dissenting ideas, and not the influence of an uncontested narrative. The lack of open debate or serious evaluation of policy options, strengthened the administration's monopoly on framing events, and inhibited the function of the marketplace of ideas.[219]

B. SECURITIZATION OF SEPTEMBER 11

Following the September 11 attacks, the United States adopted a new policy of preemptive action in response to the perception of terrorism as an existential threat to freedom and democracy. The rhetoric that framed U.S. foreign and domestic policy initiatives highlighted the threat of terrorism above all other issues. This rhetoric led to dramatic and swift changes in policy agendas, with very little debate or dissent from the administration's opponents. The reorganization of the nation's counterterrorism policy approach to "a vulnerability-led response" created an environment that promotes a sense of fear and insecurity.[220] The analysis considers the rhetoric of political leaders who characterized the September 11 terror attacks as an existential threat to freedom, democracy, and "our way of life." The discursive devices used to justify the process of securitization, and the presence of fear in the post-September 11 rhetoric, is examined.

The lack of debate about the counterterrorism policy changes is a function of securitizing the issue, which means terrorism as an existential threat reached the level of securitization and exceptionalism. Therefore, analysis of the rhetoric surrounding the events might reveal how and why the administration was successful in moving the issue out of the normal realm of politics in which debate and dissent are the typical means by which ideas are exchanged and policy options are presented. The administration's rhetoric about the WOT shaped public perception of threats and provided a narrative that

---

[218] Cramer, "Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed before the Iraq War," 489.

[219] Ronald R. Krebs and Chaim Kaufmann, "Selling the Market Short? The Marketplace of Ideas and the Iraq War," *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 200.

[220] Frank Furedi, "Fear and Security: A Vulnerability-led Policy Response," Social Policy & Administration 42, no. 6 (2008): 651.

explained the "who and why" behind the threats and "what" expected from the government, nation, and world, in response.

The rhetoric framed the September 2001 attacks as a novel threat divorced from any historical U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. The events were portrayed as attacks on "freedom, itself," and led to immediate changes in viewpoints on homeland security. The attacks became a security issue greater than the specific terrorism events of September 11, and gained priority as "more than acts of terror. They were acts of war."[221] The WOT narrative proclaimed that these "new threats also require new thinking."[222] A new strategy was required to address the novel threat to "freedom" and the "civilized way of life" that terrorism created. The WOT was presented as the only response to both the attacks and the greater threat to "our way of life;" the virtues of "freedom and democracy" were existentially threatened, which justified the securitization move.

The dominant discourse through which securitization is achieved is dependent upon the meaning provided by political leaders. The rhetoric shows the narrative advanced by the Bush administration leads to the securitization of terrorism and makes it possible to fund new initiatives and defense policies. The speech acts present the nature of the threat as asymmetric, current, and without precedent.[223] The terrorists are described "faceless cowards" who embody "evil, the very worst of human nature."[224]

The level of danger and nature of the threat expands beyond the simple tools used to perpetrate the September 2001 attacks, and is presented as an existential threat due to not only terrorist ambitions, but also rogue states that possess chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. This narrative provides several referent objects threatened by the terror attacks including "our way of life" and "innocent and unsuspecting people"…

---

[221] Bush, "Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team."

[222] George W. Bush, "U.S. Military Academy Commencement" (speech, West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, June 2, 2002).

[223] Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," 365.

[224] Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base."

> The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war. ... Freedom and democracy are under attack. This enemy attacked not just our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world.[225]

The use of the phrase "freedom-loving people everywhere" invites the international community to frame the attacks as threats against democratic values and their continued existence. The president positions the nation with the duty to remain resolute as he declares the attacks "acts of war." These rhetorical devices frame the attacks as acts of war and encourage allies to join the "coalition of the willing."[226]

The war rhetoric was constructed in the earliest remarks by the president when on the evening of September 11, he pledged, "America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism."[227] The war paradigm morphs from the "war on terror," to the "global war on terror," and encompasses the "axis of evil."[228] The rhetoric inflates the threat faced and presents it in the polarizing terms "us versus them." This dualistic construction pitting "freedom against fear" and "good against evil" forced nations to choose between opposing camps and left no room for neutrality. The outcome of this polarizing discourse sanctioned the WOT lead by the United States, and "a coalition of the willing" against "the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."[229] This polarizing approach used to frame the attacks as an existential threat that required the choosing of sides by the entire global community is proof of the inflation of a threat posed by a small number of radical fundamentalists.

While the construction of the narrative that framed the attacks as acts of war was not the only rhetorical option available to political leaders, its early emergence—on the evening of September 11—allowed the administration to fill the void with meaning, and

---

[225] Bush, "Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team."

[226] Bush, "President's Address to the Nation."

[227] Ibid.

[228] George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address of the 107th Congress" (speech, United States Capitol, January 29, 2002).

[229] Bush, "President's Address to the Nation."

subsequently, their rhetoric dominated the discourse. The following quote is excerpted from various remarks made by administration officials on the day of the attacks:

> …an apparent terrorist attack on our country; Terrorism against our nation…; Freedom, itself, was attacked; we will do whatever is necessary to protect America and Americans; A terrorist can attack at any time at any place using any technique. It is physically impossible to defend at every time in every place against every technique. It is not possible to give guarantees; these heinous acts of violence are an assault on the security of our nation. They are an assault on the security and the freedom of every American citizen; these acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat.[230]

Even at the time the narrative was being constructed as acts of war, the option to frame the attacks as criminal acts, similar to the way the 1993 attack on the WTC was handled, was available.[231] The decision to frame the narrative as war used fear rhetoric to heighten the sense of urgency and uncertainty about the future.

According to Furedi, the rhetoric of fear permeates modern western cultures and the number of phrases—"e.g., politics of fear, fear of crime, fear of the future, fear factor—attests the significance of fear as a cultural idiom for interpreting life."[232] He contends the institutionalization of fear rhetoric does not mean levels of fear have increased. Instead, the "reality of a culture of fear" is indicative of fear as a historical metaphor for sense-making and interpretation of experiences.[233]

In response to the attacks, the securitization moves were supported by the rhetoric characterizing freedom and democracy as the threatened referent objects. The president, along with members of the administration, reiterated the threats and quickly elevated the threat response to a preemptive WOT to protect America from potential existential

---

[230] George W. Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush after Two Planes Crash into World Trade Center" (speech, Sarasota, FL: Emma Booker Elementary School, September 11, 2001); Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base"; Donald Rumsfeld, press briefing on September 11, 2001; John Ashcroft, Tommy Thompson, Norm Mineta, and Joseph Allbaugh, Press Briefing on September 11, 2001; Bush, "President's Address to the Nation."

[231] Jenny Edkins, "Forget Trauma? Responses to September 11," *International Relations* 16, no. 2 (2002): 251.

[232] Frank Furedi, "The Objectification of Fear and the Grammar of Morality," *Moral Panic and the Politics of Anxiety* (2011): 90.

[233] Ibid., 91.

threats. Threats came in the form of worst-case scenario assessments on the relationship between al Qaeda and the Iraqi regime. The war narrative continued with the use of terms that evoked fear and vulnerability.[234] An example of this type of rhetoric is found in the president's address to Congress nine days after the attacks:

> After all that has just passed—all the lives taken, and all the possibilities and hopes that died with them—it is natural to wonder if America's future is one of fear. Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead, and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world. Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom—the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time—now depends on us. Our nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.[235]

The speech evokes the still recent trauma experienced, loss suffered, and harm done on September 11. The audience can easily resurrect memories of the attacks or download the sequence of events via electronic and mass media. The "dangers to face" remind the public that the threat remains. With both the vivid imagery that the speech acts elicit, and the mention of an "age of terror," the question about a "future filled with fear" suggests that the present period is replete with threats that should be feared.

Contradictions in the competing speech acts are observed in the reassuring language that follows the rhetoric of uncertainty and vulnerability. Calls for the virtues of courage, endurance, and perseverance are needed to achieve a resolute nation while the rhetoric of securitization requires the acceptance of a fear-producing existential threat. The rhetoric moves along this polarizing continuum in furtherance of the securitization of terrorism as an existential threat.

---

[234] Brian Michael Jenkins, "The New Age of Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Islam* (2006): 120.

[235] Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

VI. DISCUSSION

A. INTRODUCTION

This study analyzed the earliest remarks and speeches by the administration in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. The thesis employed the qualitative research lenses of positioning and securitization theories with the constructivist view on reality to analysis the role of political rhetoric in threat inflation and public fear. A constructivist view on reality as a social construction based on shared beliefs, understanding, and cultural norms that provide meaning aligns well with discourse analysis.[236] Constructivism is concerned with how something is constructed, and analyzing the narrative of September 11 through positioning and securitization theories unpacks the process of meaning making achieved by seemingly neutral rhetoric.[237] Constructivism does not offer "substantive explanations or predictions of political behavior until coupled with a more specific understanding of who the relevant actors are, what they want, and what the content of social structures might be."[238] Positioning and securitization analysis provide the relevant actors, illocutionary force of speech acts, and reveal patterns of reasoning in human interactions.[239] The relationship between the socially constructed reality described by constructivism and the way people make sense of and interact with this reality are addressed through positioning and securitization discourse analysis.

The analysis indicates that the relationship between political rhetoric, threat inflation, and public fear exist to the extent that the perception of threat impacts preference and support for policy agenda. The examination confirmed that the rhetorical choices of the administration inflated public perception of the threat of terrorism and

---

[236] Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," 320.

[237] Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer K. Lobasz, "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq," *Security Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 414.

[238] Finnemore and Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," 393.

[239] Rom Harré et al., "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory," *Theory & Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2009): 5.

sought to shape public response in the direction of fear and anger. The study revealed several rhetorical strategies employed in the narrative of September 11 to accomplish these influences.

B. LIMITATIONS, SHORTCOMINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research faced methodological limitations that in the time and space available were not possible to resolve. The primary obstacle was the decision to limit the selection of discourses from the available data and focus on just a small number of speakers in a relatively short timeframe from which to examine the inflation of security threats. The limitations of data and time leaves the study open to the possibility of bias by ignoring discourse from speakers who may have had the ability to influence public perception while accurately presenting security threats. While these limitations are a significant constraint on this study, when deciding on the size of the data set, the author was encouraged by the idea that a relatively small data set has value in its ability to:

> For one thing, it draws attention to the enormous influence a single text can have. For another, it encourages thorough investigation of texts, with respect to both their internal organization and their relation with the social world that they construct.[240]

Remaining mindful of the purpose and proposed research objectives, while selecting the discourses and speakers for inclusion, helped to minimize these limitations. With the luxury of time, it would have been valuable to examine a longer timeframe, larger data set, and a diversity of speakers that may have converged with or diverged from the author's findings to shed greater light on the role of political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

While this thesis endeavored to study the impact of threat inflation, the ability to measure the dynamic precisely was a limitation that offers opportunities for future research. Theories on the causes of threat inflation fall into four broad perspectives: realist—insufficient information and uncertainty about capabilities and intentions are at

[240] John Edwards and James R. Martin, "Introduction: Approaches to Tragedy," *Discourse & Society* 15, no. 2–3 (2004): 147–8.

play; psychological—cognitive and attribution errors cause threat inflation; domestic political—oversell by leaders produces threat inflation; and constructivist—threat perception and inflation are socially constructed.[241] An analysis of the threat inflation theories at play in the period studied was considered and determined to be beyond the scope of this master's level thesis due to the limitations of time and space. Instead, the study focused on the presence of threat inflation in the discourse examined and its impact without attempting to identify the causes of threat inflation. While this thesis does not examine the causes of threat inflation, the logical next step would be future research on the different perspectives on the causes of threat inflation.

C. KEY FINDINGS BASED ON THE RESEARCH QUESTION POSED IN THIS THESIS:

- Did the political rhetoric that framed the terrorist threat induce public consent on security initiatives and counterterrorism policy? Did fear factor in?

The question requires identification of the rhetorical techniques present in the administration rhetoric. The initial hypothesis was that public perception of the threat would elicit fear and lead to support for counterterrorism agenda. This position is supported by the analysis of the text to the extent that rhetorical techniques aimed at the collective sense of insecurity and uncertainty positioned the public as victims in an attempt to unite the diverse nation. The state of victimization reduced resistance to the administration's constructed narrative of the events presented without challenge from those with dissenting views.

The use of fear rhetoric to inflate public threat perception of terrorist attacks, and terrorism in general, can be seen in the earliest remarks after the September 2001 attacks. On September 11, the president remarks, "Tonight we are a country awakened to danger…,"[242] and on September 20, 2001, the metaphor, "Al Qaeda is to terror what the

---

[241] Thrall and Cramer, ed., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*, 3–11.

[242] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, President's Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks," 57–58, September 20, 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

mafia is to crime … these terrorists kill not merely to end lives but to disrupt and end a way of life" and expressing the perceived goal of the terrorist in "…they hope that America grows fearful. ..."[243] The use of fear rhetoric to persuade Americans the attacks amounted to an existential threat throughout administration rhetoric provided meaning in the wake of the attacks. The construction of social reality, through the narrative of September 11, employed rhetoric that held emotional significance, influenced the public's perception about themselves, the attacks, the nation, the terrorists, and the threat faced.[244]

Constant reminders of the vulnerability of the homeland are found in the speech acts, "…protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks …a world where freedom itself *is* under attack." As well as references to the goals of the enemy …intended to frighten our Nation into chaos and retreat…" and "…its goal is remaking the world—and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere."[245] These rhetorical devices produced support for and provided the rationale for the emergency actions taken and the use of military force in response to the threat of terrorism. Without the successful securitization of terrorism, it would have been difficult for the administration to forward the WOT agenda with the speed achieved and to the extent realized.

Fear, as a rhetorical tactic in the earliest speech acts, reminded the public of the destruction at the WTC and Pentagon sites, increased the sense of vulnerability, and inflated the nature of the threat faced. The use of rhetoric that positioned Americans as victims evoked the picture of a dependent weak population unable to take action in the face of a threat. According to McCauley, "the emotional reaction to threat is fear."[246] While this emotional state of fear might advance a sense of national unity, it would not

---

[243] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress, 65–69, September 20, 2001, http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources. http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_ George_W_Bush.pdf.

[244] David L. Altheide, "Consuming Terrorism," *Symbolic Interaction* 27, no. 3 (2004): 290.

[245] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, President's Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks"; "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress.

[246] McCauley, "Psychological Issues in Understanding Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism," 16.

lead to support of an administration policy that relied on aggressive counterterrorism measures.[247] The use of fear, as a tactic in the move toward securitization, ends as the rhetoric nudges the recently unified nation from a state of fear to one of anger. According to psychologist Jennifer S. Lerner and Dacher Keltner, "…fear and anger, although both negative, differ in terms of the certainty and control dimensions. Whereas a sense of situational control and uncertainty defines fear, a sense of individual control and certainty defines anger."[248]

The administration's rhetorical tactics progressed to promote anger over fear—"Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution"—and encouraged emotional responses that elicit patriotism and pride—"we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world."[249] Researchers have shown that anger fosters support for "strong and moderate military intervention, increased surveillance, and a rejection of increased humanitarian aid."[250] Anger was used to garner support for policy that promoted aggression and military action. Rhetoric that encouraged anger included a sense of certainty of victory and superiority:

> The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.
>
> Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice—assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come.[251]

The political rhetoric ascribed rights and duties to the public as "innocent victims," and "resolute heroes" providing victims the right to sympathy and prayer in

---

[247] Ibid., Melody S. Sadler et al., "Emotions, Attributions, and Policy Endorsement in Response to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 3 (2005): 250.

[248] Jennifer S. Lerner and Dacher Keltner, "Fear, Anger, and Risk," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 1 (2001): 147.

[249] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress; "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, President's Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks"; Sadler et al., "Emotions, Attributions, and Policy Endorsement in Response to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks," 250.

[250] Sadler et al., "Emotions, Attributions, and Policy Endorsement in Response to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks," 255.

[251] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

contrast to the heroes' duty to remain "determined and strong."[252] The narrative uses emotional rhetoric during a period of chaos and uncertainty. This rhetoric is used to stand the good American in opposition to the evil terrorist.

1. Rhetoric of Polarization

The rhetoric of polarization is, "the process by which an extremely diversified public is coalesced into two or more highly contrasting, mutually exclusive groups showing a high degree of internal solidarity in those beliefs which the persuader considers salient." They continue to identify the scope of polarization as follows:

- It implies a powerful feeling of solidarity—strong group cohesiveness, unity, we feeling, human homogenization.
- It presupposes the existence of a perceived common foe that the group must oppose if it is to preserve the fabric of beliefs out of which the persuader has woven its identity.

The rhetoric of polarization, like SIT, adopts techniques that divide the world into opposing camps—ingroup/outgroup—with no acknowledged similarities or the possibility for convergence. Artificial dichotomy and binary opposition are two tactics that construct an either/or worldview of salient issues, such as terrorism.[253]

2. Artificial Dichotomies

Artificial dichotomies occur when the speaker presents only two diametrically opposed options for the audience to choose from with no option for remaining neutral.[254] The use of artificial dichotomy is seen in the examined speeches when the president states:

> Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation

[252] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

[253] Richard D. Raum and James S. Measell, "Wallace and His Ways: A Study of the Rehtorical Genre of Polarization," *Communication Studies* 25, no. 1 (1974): 28.

[254] Ibid., 30–31.

> that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.[255]

The purpose of artificial dichotomies is to force listeners to either position themselves, or be positioned by the speaker. The use of the term "artificial" suggests the existence of other, more moderate, options not referenced by the speaker. The rhetoric of artificial dichotomy encompasses the creation of ingroup/outgroup binary opposition or "we/they" distinctions of polarization rhetoric.[256]

3. Binary Opposition

Binary rhetoric divides the world into two opposing camps with no similarity or possibility of convergence. The goal of binary discourse is to simplify complex issues in an effort to gain public support for questionable policies.[257] The "us versus them" discourse that unifies the nation leads to rally-round-the-flag phenomena, and dehumanizing of the enemy (outgroup). The narrative of September 11 makes frequent reference to an American way of life that positions the citizens of America as a "loving and giving people," in opposition to the designation of the terrorist as "murderers indicted for bombing."[258] The United States is defined as the "brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world," while the enemy is the purveyor of "deliberate and deadly terrorist acts."[259] The polarizing rhetoric goes further to draw a distinction between the goals of the ingroup and outgroup—"freedom versus fear" and "justice versus cruelty."[260] The tactic of binary opposition lends itself to threat inflation because in elevating terrorism to an existential threat, the administration needed to build up the

---

[255] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

[256] Raum and Measell, "Wallace and His Ways: A Study of the Rehtorical Genre of Polarization," 32.

[257] Wassim Daghrir, "Binary Discourse in U.S. Presidential Speeches from FDR to Bush II," *IOSR Journal of Applied Physics (IOSR-JAP)* 2, no. 2 (November–December 2013): 29.

[258] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

[259] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, President's Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks."

[260] "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."

intentions and capabilities of the terrorist to match the constructed threat it wants the public to accept as true.

The binary view of good and evil comes not merely to define every significant political issue but to engulf all political debate. One is presented with a false choice: embrace and actively support the president's policies to wage war on Evil (patriotism) or side with evil, either deliberately or by default (un-American / unpatriotic). Stressing national unity and patriotism provides rhetorical cover for suppressing dissent, and thus threatens U.S. democracy.[261]

"King and Anderson note that to be successful the practitioner of a rhetoric of polarization must have available an audience of potentially sympathetic individuals. Uncommitted individuals are not seen as neutral, but as either potential converts or foes. The goal of using rhetoric of polarization is to induce uncommitted individuals to choose one of the two competing groups."[262] Polarization or othering can be seen in the rhetoric defining September 11.

The use of the rhetorical strategy of polarization that encompasses SIT was revealed in the administration's narrative that became a campaign fought between "good and evil," "'freedom and fear." Once this version of reality and the existential threat were accepted, the subsequent emergency measures were achieved within the realm of securitization politics.

D. POSITIONING THEORY

Positioning analysis identified the speech acts that framed the threat in polarizing terms—freedom versus fear—that positioned U.S. citizens in relation to the terrorists—us/them, good/evil. Utilizing positioning theory analysis reveals reality construction through the use of a narrative that positioned, assigned rights, and meaning for the nation.

---

[261] Daghrir, "Binary Discourse in U.S. Presidential Speeches from FDR to Bush II," 30.

[262] Andrew King and Floyd Anderson, "Nixon, Agnew and the 'Silent Majority': A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization," *Western Speech* 35 (1971): 243–255, in Monica C. Brasted, "MoveOn: The Rhetoric of Polarization," Communication Faculty Publications, no. 2 (2012): 5, http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cmc_facpub/2?utm_source=digitalcommons.brockport.edu%2Fcmc_facpub%2F2&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

The positioning theory analysis focused on the illocutionary force of the speech acts that conveyed meaning and identified what the administration perceived as threatened—the U.S. way of life and freedom, itself—the referent objects that provided the elements necessary for the securitization process.

E. SECURITIZATION THEORY

Securitization of terrorism as an existential threat was achieved using the referent objects—"freedom, itself," "our way of life," "civilized way of life"—identified as threatened by the external threat of terrorism in the speech acts examined. These referent objects all represent democracy and the democratic values of liberty and American exceptionalism. The securitizing actor set in motion the securitizing moves that once accepted by the public led to the rapid enactment of counterterrorism policy that included the establishment of the DHS, and the passage of the Patriot Act, which bypassed the normal political processes through the securitization of terrorism.

F. SUMMARY

The administration's ability to stay on message was persuasive and effective. With the media taking up the narrative, and pop culture repackaging the message for consumerism, they acted as force multipliers.[263] The meaning of the September 11 terrorist attacks was set, and the lack of debate, dissent, or counternarratives left the appearance of bipartisan support for the administration's initiatives. The ways in which the administration's remarks and speeches influenced public perception of reality is revealed in the way the nation internalized the rhetoric used to speak about the attacks. Social and political thought were standardized by the only source of meaning; the administration's narrative constructed through the use of emotional and polarizing rhetoric.

[263] Altheide, "Consuming Terrorism," 290.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

VII. CONCLUSION: FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION

A. INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzed political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks to determine whether political rhetoric contributed to threat inflation, public fear, and misperception of security threats faced by the American public. The examination of the role of rhetoric in the construction of the narrative of the attacks shows how words can set the boundaries of permissible discourse and behavior, and defines the social reality for a nation.[264] Political rhetoric framed the terrorist attacks in terms of war, which shaped not only meaning, but policy as well. "Securing the homeland" became the stated rationale for legislative action and policy change in the days, months, and years following the attacks.

Political reality is socially constructed, and thus, the accepted narrative of September 11 was just one possible version that could have prevailed.[265] Selection of alternative frames for defining the terrorist attacks would have produced different responses and outcomes. The ability of the administration to coalesce the national response and public sentiment under the established storyline is an example of the power of rhetoric. A review of the post-September 11 approach to the threat of terrorism reveals alternate responses to terrorism and homeland security policy options, as well as concerns and implications for future administrations to consider.

B. THE POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF RHETORIC

In the Aristotelian tradition, rhetoric is defined as, "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."[266] As succinctly put by Hudson, "rhetoric is the art of persuasion."[267] It may be in the form of a speech, or other type of discourse,

---

[264] Edelman, "Political Language and Political Reality," 10.

[265] Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," 611.

[266] Aristotle, *Rhetorica: The Works of Aristotle*.

[267] Hoyt H. Hudson, "The Field of Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 9, no. 2 (1923): 170.

persuasively presented.[268] Rhetoric is a means of influence; it is used to gain the cooperation of others. Cooperation may be achieved through discursive persuasion or coercion.[269] While both coercion and persuasion can lead an audience to assent, the coerced target merely complies, while the persuaded target consents.[270]

Rhetoric is the discursive representation of beliefs. Ideas are formulated and conveyed through discourse. Rhetoric provides meaning, and creates social and political reality for a society. It structures behaviors and frames actions. This thesis approached the analysis of political rhetoric with the premise that words have meaning, and the way in which words are used, impacts the world. The use of political rhetoric to influence behavior is not a new phenomenon, and examples abound in history.

The successful presidential campaign of Barack Obama, who was at the time a one-term U.S. senator, used rhetoric to appeal to the American public's desire for something better or at least different. Through the strategic use of rhetoric, he positioned himself and the public as change agents by purporting belief "in the power of the American people to be the real agents of change in this country."[271] His rhetoric offered the nation a vision for "change" and "hope." He asserted the peoples' right—and perhaps duty—to participate in bringing about this change by reminding his target audience:

> You've earned the role you play in our democracy because no one takes it more seriously. And I believe that's true this year more than ever because, like me, you feel that same sense of urgency.[272]

As a candidate, Obama replicated President John F. Kennedy's inauguration address rhetoric, which reminded the public of the impact of fear, by stating, "…we must never negotiate out of fear, but that we must never fear to negotiate with our enemies as

---

[268] Hudson, "The Field of Rhetoric," 170.

[269] Robert L. Scott, "On Not Defining 'Rhetoric,'" *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (1973): 91.

[270] Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 60.

[271] Barack Obama, "Our Moment is Now" (speech, Des Moines, IA, December 27, 2007). http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=77026.

[272] Ibid.

well as our friends."[273] He went further by noting the use of fear rhetoric in politics post-September 11:

> We can't afford the same politics of fear that tells Democrats that the only way to look tough on national security is to talk, act, and vote like George Bush Republicans; that invokes 9/11 as a way to scare up votes instead of a challenge that should unite all Americans to defeat our real enemies.[274]

Communicating a plan of action through the "yes we can" slogan, Obama influenced Americans' hope for a better future and shaped their behavior to meet the call to action, which was demonstrated concretely in subsequent voting rates during primaries and on Election Day.[275] His success embraced a rhetorical style that promotes cooperation, influenced behavior, and prompted action through discursive persuasion.[276]

The War Scare of 1948 is a historical example of the use of rhetoric to achieve public support through the exaggeration of security threats faced from the Soviet Union, communism, and the prospect of war. The Truman administration, aware of strong anti-communist sentiment among many Americans, tapped into these fears and beliefs. The administration went public in numerous speeches in an effort to pressure Congress to pass the legislation. The rhetoric employed heightened the public's sense of vulnerability to the spread of communism and the imminent threat of war. *New York Times* correspondent James Reston exposed the administration's fear rhetoric by noting:

> Executive branch of the Government, in an effort to gain Congressional support of its policies, has been talking a good deal about war lately. In its eagerness to manipulate Congress, the Truman administration had "acquired the habit of emphasizing and sometimes even of

[273] Obama, "Our Moment is Now."

[274] Ibid.

[275] Thom File, "The Diversifying Electorate—Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections)," in *Current Population Survey Reports* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

[276] Adrianna Kezar and Peter Eckel, "Advancing Diversity Agendas on Campus: Examining Transactional and Transformational Presidential Leadership Styles," *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 11, no. 4 (2008): 381.

> overemphasizing the danger" posed by the U.S.S.R. "We legislate, in short, in an atmosphere of crisis…"[277]

Ultimately, the Truman administration's fear tactics and political rhetoric were successful in getting its preferred legislation passed without amendment.[278]

More recent rhetoric that illustrates the power of words to shape behavior and frame action is found in the discourse available in the Congressional Record on the topic of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act. The USA PATRIOT Act, known as the Patriot Act, was quickly drafted by the administration, rushed through Congress, and signed into law on October 26, 2001, and was described by Kam C. Wong as "entirely a Bush administration's brainchild; conceived by the [Attorney General], imposed on the Congress and fed to the American people in a time of crisis and with the use of high-handed tactics."[279] This swift process was accomplished without the normal legislative review.[280]

The rhetoric that framed and inflated the security threat dissuaded the patience required for deliberative evaluation during passage of the Patriot Act.[281] The modest opposition voiced during the abbreviated Senate hearings recalled the nation's history of legislation enacted in times of crisis:

> Of course, there have been periods in our nation's history when civil liberties have taken a back seat to what appeared at the time to be the legitimate exigencies of war. Our national consciousness still bears the stain and the scars of those events: The Alien and Sedition Acts, the suspension of habeas corpus during the Civil War, the internment of Japanese-Americans, German-Americans, and Italian-Americans during World War II, the blacklisting of supposed communist sympathizers during the McCarthy era, and the surveillance and harassment of antiwar

---

[277] Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 130.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Wong, "The Making of the USA Patriot Act I: The Legislative Process and Dynamics," 182.

[280] Ibid., 181.

[281] Erwin Chemerinsky, "Losing Liberties: Applying a Foreign Intelligence Model to Domestic Law Enforcement," *Immigr. & Nat'lity L. Rev.* 25 (2004): 19.

> protesters, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., during the Vietnam War. We must not allow these pieces of our past to become prologue.[282]

These words, meant to serve as a harbinger of things to come, were dismissed by the prevailing voices that echoed the administration's narrative and fear rhetoric, such as by Senator Hatch:

> As the past few weeks have made clear, these terrorists still have a gun pointed at the heads of all the American people. Under such circumstances, it is our sworn duty to do everything in our power, within the bounds of the Constitution, to protect and defend our people. That is what this bill does.
>
> The Senator from Wisconsin worries about the "possible'' loss of civil liberties. That is laudable. But I am more concerned about the actual loss of the thousands of lives that have been lost and the potential of other lives that may be lost because we don't give law enforcement the tools they need.[283]

The use of rhetoric to convey a sense of urgency and fear closes down deliberation and stifles dissent.[284] This is the power of rhetoric.

C. HOW WAS RHETORIC USED AFTER SEPTEMBER 11?

The enormity of the events on September 11 maximized media coverage that quickly took on the semblance of America under attack.[285] The attacks required a cogent response from elected officials that provided context and meaning.[286] The beliefs and actions of the public would likely fall in lock step if the selected narrative provided either a sense of security or debilitating insecurity. The Bush administration chose the latter.

The administration quickly set the meaning of the terror attacks, and as a result, the ability of others to debate or voice dissent against the narrative was subdued. The constructed narrative shaped the meaning of the terrorist attacks and public perception of

---

[282] Senator Feingold, speaking on S. 11020, on October 25, 2001, *Congressional Record* 147, no. 144.

[283] Senator Hatch, speaking on S. 11023, on October 25, 2001, *Congressional Record* 147, no. 144.

[284] Wong, "The Making of the USA Patriot Act I: The Legislative Process and Dynamics," 201.

[285] Krebs and Lobasz, "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq," 413.

[286] Ibid.

the threat. National discourse and foreign policy debate on war and terrorism was confined to that space.

Within the space that political rhetoric built, the administration shaped public perception of the threat faced using rhetoric to build a culture of fear that led to the implementation of the administration's preferred agenda with little opposition or debate. The ensuing culture of fear, and the public and political acquiescence of the meaning of the events of September 11, permitted the administration to integrate Saddam Hussein, Iraq, and WMD into the storyline. The narrative became the dominant discursive thread defining the attacks and meaning of September 11, which led to the fast formation of the DHS, passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, permission for military action in Afghanistan, a preemptive war against Iraq, and the commencement of the GWOT.

1. The DHS

Within 11 days of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) and the Homeland Security Council were created through the presidential power of an executive order.[287] The creation of a cabinet-level department to address the federal government's disjointed and compartmentalized approach to homeland security led to the eventual consolidation of 22 federal agencies under the DHS umbrella in 2002. The objective of the reorganization was to increase the government's focus and effectiveness in addressing security threats within U.S. borders. However, the failure to include an intelligence agency within the new department left the DHS in the position of coordinating with the existing intelligence agencies, and thus, no closer to a more streamlined and effective approach to intelligence coordination.[288] The ability of the DHS leadership to foster a single coherent organizational culture, and shared mission among 22 distinct agencies, ultimately, will determine its success.

---

[287] Ted G. Lewis, *Critical Infrastructure Protection in Homeland Security: Defending a Networked Nation* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 55.

[288] Donald F. Kettl, *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013), 64.

2. Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required To Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act

The Patriot Act gave law enforcement and the executive branch greater powers to address security concerns related to terrorism on the home front. It expanded the application of the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to domestic investigations by relaxing restrictions that prevent the collection of intelligence in domestic cases. The subtle change in language in the Patriot Act allowed federal agents to monitor, intercept, and collect the electronic communications of U.S. citizens. Information previously prohibited from being gathered could now be used by the government against U.S. citizens in domestic criminal cases.[289]

While it is unlikely the intent behind the Patriot Act was to authorize surveillance of domestic communications or restrict citizens' civil liberties, nevertheless, the rush to implementation had unintended consequences that threatened the constitutional rights of citizens who had no connection to terrorism.[290]

3. Afghanistan

In the minds of most Americans, as well as the international community, retaliation against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan made sense. In the days after the attacks, Congress sanctioned the use of military force, which was the administration's preferred response. The administration commenced the WOT in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, with broad international support including military support from a "coalition of the willing." Yet, when weighing the opportunity cost incurred in the rush to war in Afghanistan, John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart describe the response as an "extreme reaction" that exacted a financial cost to America estimated in dollars between "multiple hundreds of billions to a few trillion."[291] While the death toll from the September 2001

---

[289] Daniel J. Solove, "Reconstructing Electronic Surveillance Law," *Geo. Wash. L. Rev.*72 (2003): 1731.

[290] John W. Whitehead and Steven H. Aden, "Forfeiting Enduring Freedom for Homeland Security: A Constitutional Analysis of the USA Patriot Act and the Justice Department's Anti-Terrorism Initiatives," *Am. UL Rev.* 51 (2001): 1083.

[291] John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, *Terror, Security, and Money: Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72.

terror attacks was significant, the damage inflicted by al-Qaeda was not an existential threat to America and was counterproductive for the terrorist network itself.[292] Support for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda in Muslim countries "plunged from 25% to less than 1%," as a large portion of the Islamic world rejected the al-Qaeda ideology.[293]

A 23-year member of the U.S. CIA's clandestine service and retired deputy national intelligence officer for transnational threats wrote, "We must not take fright at the specter our leaders have exaggerated. In fact, we must see jihadists for the small, lethal, disjointed and miserable opponents that they are."[294] A less costly response in proportion to the damage inflicted would consider the capacity, not intent, of al-Qaeda when assessing alternate actions. The administration's inflation of al-Qaeda's capacity to inflict harm on the United States sustained the decision to respond with force and created the opportunity to extend the WOT beyond Afghanistan to Iraq and the ousting of the Saddam regime.

4. Iraq and the GWOT

A year after the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush announced, "al-Qaeda terrorists escaped from Afghanistan and are known to be in Iraq."[295] Along with the numerous statements by top administration officials asserting Saddam Hussein acquired or possessed WMD, this tenuous link to al-Qaeda began the administration's public justifications for extending the WOT to Iraq. Matthew Duss and Peter Juul assert:

> The Iraq invasion was sold to the American public on the basis of Saddam Hussein's supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction and his alleged relationship with Al Qaeda. When both claims turned out to be false, the Bush administration justified the intervention on the idea that a democratic Iraq would be an ally in the "war on terror" and an inspiration

---

[292] Mueller Stewart, *Terror, Security, and Money: Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security*, 31–32.

[293] Ibid.

[294] Glenn L. Carle, "Overstating Our Fears," *Washington Post*, July 13, 2008.

[295] George W. Bush, "Address to the United Nations General Assembly" (speech, New York, NY, September 12, 2002).

> for democratic reform in the Middle East. These arguments remain, at best, highly questionable.[296]

The administration commenced a propaganda campaign, meticulously staying on message, inflating the threat, and extending the September 11 narrative to the case for war against Iraq. Their political rhetoric fostered unfounded fears that the public typically harbors about remote dangers.[297] The socially constructed narrative successfully linked the al-Qaeda terrorists, Saddam Hussein, WMD, and fear of mushroom clouds over American cities, all while ignoring alternative assessments of intelligence that did not bolster the administration's case for war.[298]

The following quotes are examples of administration rhetoric linking these threats:

> (1) There is certainly evidence that al Qaeda people have been in Iraq. There is certainly evidence that Saddam Hussein cavorts with terrorists. I think: that if you asked, do we know that he had a role in 9/11, no, we do not know that he had a role in 9/11. But I think: that this is the test that sets a bar that is far too high.[299]

> (2) We also know that Iraq is harboring a terrorist network, headed by a senior al Qaeda terrorist planner. The network runs a poison and explosive training center in northeast Iraq, and many of its leaders are known to be in Baghdad.[300]

> (3) The Iraqi regime has in fact been very busy enhancing its capabilities in the field of chemical and biological agents. And they continue to pursue the nuclear program they began so many years ago.
>
> But we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

---

296 Matthew Duss and Peter Juul, "The Iraq War Ledger (2013 Update): A Look at the War's Human, Financial, and Strategic Costs," Center for American Progress, March 19, 2013, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/03/19/57173/the-iraq-war-ledger-2013-update.

297 Mueller, "Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration," 228.

298 *Report by the Select Committee on Intelligence on Whether Public Statements Regarding Iraq by U.S. Government Officials Were Substantiated By Intelligence, Together With Additional and Minority Views*, S. Rep. No. 110–345 (2008) at 15.

299 Rice, interview by Wolf Blitzer.

300 George W. Bush, "President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference" (speech, Washington, DC: The East Room, March 6, 2003).

> Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.
>
> What he wants is time and more time to husband his resources, to invest in his ongoing chemical and biological weapons programs, and to gain possession of nuclear arms."[301]
>
> (4) But Saddam Hussein has defied all these efforts and continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The first time we may be completely certain he has a—nuclear weapon is when, God forbids, he uses one.[302]
>
> (5) The Iraqi regime has violated all of these obligations. It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons.
>
> If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year.
>
> Facing clear evidence of peril we cannot wait for the final proof- the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.
>
> We could wait and hope that Saddam does not give weapons to terrorists, or develop a nuclear weapon to blackmail the world. But I'm convinced that is a hope against all evidence.[303]
>
> (6) We have no indication that Saddam Hussein has ever abandoned his nuclear weapons program. On the contrary, we have more than a decade of proof that he remains determined to acquire nuclear weapons.[304]
>
> (7) [Saddam Hussein's] regime has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons.[305]

The possibility of countering this narrative required accessing another information source that, for the most part, did not exist. The Democratic leadership did not present a unique cohesive account for possible debate and critical evaluation of the

---

[301] Richard Cheney, "Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention" (speech, Nashville, TN, August 27, 2002).

[302] Bush, "Address to the United Nations General Assembly."

[303] George W. Bush, "President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat" (speech, Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Museum Center, October 7, 2002).

[304] Colin Powell, "Address to the United Nations Security Council" (speech, New York, NY, February 5, 2003).

[305] *Testimony of U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld before the House Armed Services Committee regarding Iraq*, 107th Cong., 1 (2002) (statement of Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense.)

administration's proposed narrative.[306] The push toward war in Iraq based on questionable intelligence unraveled international support for the GWOT, and eventually, tested the American public's patience for the human and economic toll of two wars.

As Kostas Gouliamos and Christos Kassimeris note, "While the attacks on 9/11 were both horrendous and shocking, the decisions that were taken in response to those events and their consequences have been far more important than the al-Qaeda attacks in actually shaping the post-9/11 world in the US."[307] It was not inevitable that a war be declared. Other choices besides than military escalation were available, which had been employed by prior administrations in response to threats. For example, working with and through the UN and the ICC was a viable alternative.

The use of fear rhetoric and threat inflation to influence public fear helped move forward an agenda that infringed on constitutional rights and established a link between the September 11 terror attacks, al-Qaeda, Iraq, and the GWOT. The administration's agenda was achieved at the expense of democratic debate and constructive deliberation on alternative paths available in the fight against terrorism.

D. POST-CRISIS RHETORIC

1. What Should We Do After the Next Crisis?

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration's rhetorical choices led to a missed opportunity to communicate strategies that had the potential to reduce vulnerability, build resilience, and enhance social cohesion. To achieve a less fearful and more resilient population in the aftermath of the terror attacks, the use of language that offers actionable steps for preparedness, and mitigation of potential threats, would be appropriate and preferred.

The goal of political rhetoric in times of crisis should be to foster critical discourse in the policy arena and understanding by the American population and elected

---

[306] Krebs and Lobasz, "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq," 411.

[307] Kostas Gouliamos and Christos Kassimeris, ed., *The Marketing of War in the Age of Neo-militarism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 107.

officials about the nebulous nature of security threats faced from terrorism. Informed discourse requires transparency in communicating threats, consequences, and consideration of alternate proposals.

It is crucial that government encourage civic and community involvement through programs to empower individuals and communities in times of crisis and insecurity. Ultimately, the American public deserves honest facts about the actual threats faced from global and homegrown terror to reduce the psychological implications of political rhetoric employed to advance an agenda.

2. What Should We Be Careful About?

Whether intentionally introduced or a natural response, fear poses a problem for an open democratic society.[308] Fear can have debilitating effects on people during a time of crisis. Fearful people do not always react appropriately in circumstances that require immediate action. The casualty counts from a terror attack on American soil could be impacted if the public remains anxious and fearful. A fearful population is vulnerable. The objective of the terrorist is the psychological repercussions from attacks, and Mueller notes that response could thwart this objective:

> If this is the plan, terrorists can be defeated simply by not becoming terrified and by resisting the temptation to overreact. The shock and tragedy of 9/11 does demand a focused and dedicated program to confront international terrorism and to attempt to prevent a repetition, of course. But it seems sensible to suggest that part of this reaction should include an effort by politicians, officials, and the media to inform the public reasonably and realistically about the terrorist context instead of playing into the hands of terrorists by effectively seeking to terrify the public. What is needed, then, as one statistician suggests, is some sort of convincing, coherent, informed, and nuanced answer to a central question: "How worried should I be?"[309]

If government officials engage in fear rhetoric, they are adopting the terrorists' agenda and helping the terrorists accomplish their goals. A policy of exaggerating

[308] Keane, "Fear and Democracy," 226–235.

[309] Mueller, "Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration," 222.

security threats leads to funding initiatives that provide a false sense of security but do not usually make the public safer.[310]

3. What Counsel Should We Give the President?

The political implications of framing the terrorist attacks as acts of war allowed the administration to expand the September 11 response to the WOT. A more open approach to securing the homeland against the threat of terrorism would be to provide the American public with facts that illuminate the issue instead of obfuscating with fear. Public perception based on factual information extends the boundaries of the September 11 narrative and creates opportunities to weigh the range of options open to the United States and policy makers. The decision to move forward with hard power strategies, such as strategic cruise missile and drone strikes, should be weighed against soft power options of diplomacy, law enforcement investigations, and the ICC. Failure to consider alternatives may have led to the missed opportunity to leverage Islamic opposition to the terrorist attacks for assistance in securing the capture of bin Laden and al-Qaeda operatives. As Noam Chomsky notes:

> There is every likelihood that the Jihadi movement, much of it highly critical of bin Laden, could have been split and undermined after 9/11. The "crime against humanity," as it was rightly called, could have been approached as a crime, with an international operation to apprehend the likely suspects. That was recognized at the time, but no such idea was even considered.[311]

The use of military force had limited success in eradicating the threat of terrorism against the United States. Thoughtful deliberation of policy alternatives in the democratic spirit of debate might have led to a different outcome and a more balanced approach to terrorism than what was created with the WOT narrative.

History books tend to only document the path chosen and overlook the host of options available at the onset of a policy decision. Recent U.S. history provides examples in which a culture of fear was achieved through the use of rhetoric that overstated the

---

[310] Sunstein, "Fear and Liberty," 967.

[311] Noam Chomsky, *9–11: Was There an Alternative?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011), 22.

threat to national security. Mueller believes that the impulse to react hastily to a threat, "without a great deal of thought about alternative policies," can be "costly, unnecessary and counterproductive."[312] The measures taken in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks were certainly not the only course of action available; however, the decisions made and rhetoric favored by U.S. leaders acted on public fear and misperception of the threat faced from terrorism. By exploring rhetoric and threat perception, alternative responses to threat inflation can be identified and opportunity costs considered.

In the aftermath of September 11, rhetoric quelled dissent and garnered unprecedented policy support from U.S. citizens and the international community. The repercussions from political choices linger today in the cost associated with continued military presence in countries invaded or liberated, lives lost in two wars, and the outsized growth to the national debt. The response involved the overestimation of external threats to national security in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Whether leaders ushered in this period of insecurity unintentionally or by design, the practice of overstating the threat through political rhetoric influenced public fear and threat perception.

The analysis illustrated the way rhetoric can be used to manage public understanding and reaction in times of crisis while limiting response options. Unpacking the tools of political rhetoric invites careful evaluation of future narratives that shape reality and encourages citizens to require leaders to formulate policy responses that manage crises through more deliberate and effective means.

[312] Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*, 9–10.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Adler, Emanuel. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 319–363.

Altheide, David L. "Consuming Terrorism." *Symbolic Interaction* 27, no. 3 (2004): 289–308.

———. The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear." *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1997): 646–668.

———. *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006.

Aristotle. *Rhetorica: The Works of Aristotle*, vol. 11. trans. W. Rhys Roberts. http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/a8rh/contents.html.

Balzacq, Thierry. "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context." *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 171–201.

Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Begley, Sharon, Anne Underwood, Richard Wolffe, Suzanne Smalley, and Jeneen Interlandi. "The Roots of Fear." *Newsweek* 24 (2007): 26.

Bernays, Edward L., and Mark Crispin Miller. *Propaganda*. Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 1928.

Birkland, Thomas A. *After Disaster: Agenda Setting, Public Policy, and Focusing Events*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1997.

Boin, Arjen, Eric Stern, Paul 't Hart and Bengt Sundelius. *The Politics of Crisis Management*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Brandon, Susan E., and Andrew P. Silke. "Near-and Long-term Psychological Effects of Exposure to Terrorist Attacks." *Psychology of Terrorism* (2007): 175–193.

Brannan, David W., Philip F. Esler, and N. T. Anders Strindberg. "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001): 3–24.

Burger, Peter, and Thomas Luckman. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1966.

Burkle, Frederick M. “Population-based Triage Management in Response to Surge-capacity Requirements during a Large-scale Bioevent Disaster.” *Academic Emergency Medicine* 13, no. 11 (2006): 1118–1129.

Bush, George W. “Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress.” Speech, United States Capitol, September 20, 2001.

———. “Address to the Nation on Iraq from Cincinnati, Ohio.” Speech, Cincinnati, OH, October 7, 2002.

———. “Address to the Nation on the September 11 Attacks.” Speech, Washington, DC: The Oval Office, September 11, 2001.

———. “Address to the United Nations General Assembly.” Speech, New York, NY, September 12, 2002.

———. “President’s Address to the Nation.” Speech, Washington, DC: The Oval Office, September 20, 2001.

———. “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat.” Speech, Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Museum Center, October 7, 2002.

———. “President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference.” Speech, Washington, DC: The East Room, March 6, 2003.

———. “Remarks by President George W. Bush after Two Planes Crash into World Trade Center.” Speech, Sarasota, FL: Emma Booker Elementary School, September 11, 2001.

———. “Remarks by President George W. Bush upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base.” Speech, Barksdale Air Force Base, September 11, 2001.

———. “Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team.” Speech, Washington, DC: The Cabinet Room, September 12, 2001.

———. “State of the Union Address of the 107th Congress.” Speech, United States Capitol, January 29, 2002.

———. “U.S. Military Academy Commencement.” Speech, West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, June 2, 2002.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Carle, Glenn L. “Overstating Our Fears.” *Washington Post*, July 13, 2008.

Chang, Nancy. *Silencing Political Dissent: How Post-September 11 Anti-Terrorism Measures Threaten our Civil Liberties*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011.

Chapman, Terrence L., and Dan Reiter. “The United Nations Security Council and the Rally’round the Flag Effect.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004): 886–909.

Chemerinsky, Erwin. “Losing Liberties: Applying a Foreign Intelligence Model to Domestic Law Enforcement.” *Immigr. & Nat’lity L. Rev.* 25 (2004): 19.

Cheney, Richard. “Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention.” Speech, Nashville, TN, August 27, 2002.

Chomsky, Noam. *9–11: Was There an Alternative?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011.

Cobden, Richard. *The Three Panics: An Historical Episode*. London: Cassell, 1804–1884. Kindle edition.

Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Cramer, Jane Kellett. “Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed before the Iraq War.” *Security Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 489–524.

Crawford, Neta C. “The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships.” *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000): 116–156.

Daghrir, Wassim. “Binary Discourse in U.S. Presidential Speeches from FDR to Bush II.” *IOSR Journal of Applied Physics (IOSR-JAP)* 2, no. 2 (November–December 2013): 25–36.

Davis, James W. *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Department of Justice. “Remarks of Attorney General John Ashcroft. September 11, 2001.” March 1, 2014. http://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/2001/agcrisisremarks.htm.

Duss, Matthew, and Peter Juul. “The Iraq War Ledger (2013 Update): A Look at the War’s Human, Financial, and Strategic Costs.” Center for American Progress, March 19, 2013. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/03/19/57173/the-iraq-war-ledger-2013-update.

Edelman, Murray. “Political Language and Political Reality.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 18, no. 01 (1985): 10–19.

Edkins, Jenny. “Forget Trauma? Responses to September 11.” *International Relations* 16, no. 2 (2002): 243–256.

Edwards, John, and James R. Martin. “Introduction: Approaches to Tragedy.” *Discourse & Society* 15, no. 2–3 (2004): 147–154.

Emmers, Ralf. “‘Securitization.’” In Contemporary Security Studies, edited by Alan Collins. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. http://iheid.revues.org/docannexe/image/719/img-1.png.

Executive Office of the President. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.* Washington, DC: The White House, 2002.

Feingold, Senator. Speaking on S. 11020, on October 25, 2001, *Congressional Record* 147, no. 144.

File, Thom. “The Diversifying Electorate—Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections).” In *Current Population Survey Reports*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013.

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 391–416.

Foucault, Michel. “Orders of Discourse.” *Social Science Information* 10, no. 2 (1971): 7–30.

Foyle, Douglas C. “Leading the public to war? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administration’s Decision to Go to War in Iraq.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16, no. 3 (2004): 269–294.

Furedi, Frank. “Fear and Security: A Vulnerability-led Policy Response.” *Social Policy & Administration* 42, no. 6 (2008): 645–661.

———. “Precautionary Culture and the Rise of Possibilistic Risk Assessment.” *Erasmus L. Rev.* 2 (2009): 197–220.

———. “The Objectification of Fear and the Grammar of Morality.” *Moral Panic and the Politics of Anxiety* (2011): 90–103.

———. “The Only Thing We Have to Fear is the ‘Culture of Fear’ Itself.” *American Journal of Sociology* 32 (2007): 231–234.

Gamson, William A., David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Theodore Sasson. “Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18, no. 1 (1992): 375–395.

George W. Bush White House Archives. “Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress, 65–69. September 20, 2001. http://www.911memorial.org/911-primary-sources. http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

———. “Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush 2001–2008, President’s Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks.” 57–58. September 20, 2001. http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

Gershkoff, Amy, and Shana Kushner. “Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration’s Rhetoric.” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 03 (2005): 525–537.

Gigerenzer, Gerd. “Dread Risk, September 11, and Fatal Traffic Accidents.” *Psychological Science* 15, no. 4 (2004): 286–287.

Glassner, Barry. *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Goode, Erich, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009.

Gouliamos, Kostas, and Christos Kassimeris, ed. *The Marketing of War in the Age of Neo-militarism*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Gray, Colin S. *Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force As an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2011.

Hall, Stuart, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, vol. 2. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1997.

Harré, Rom, and Fathali M. Moghaddam, ed. *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003.

Harré, Rom, and Luk Van Langenhove. *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Harré, Rom, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Tracey Pilkerton Cairnie, Daniel Rothbart, and Steven R. Sabat. “Recent Advances in Positioning Theory.” *Theory & Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2009): 5–31.

Hatch, Senator. Speaking on S. 11023, on October 25, 2001. *Congressional Record* 147, no. 144.

Hawdon, James E. “The Role of Presidential Rhetoric in the Creation of a Moral Panic: Reagan, Bush, and the War on Drugs.” *Deviant Behavior* 22, no. 5 (2001): 419–445.

Henry, Vincent E. “The Need for a Coordinated and Strategic Local Police Approach to Terrorism: A Practitioner’s Perspective.” In *Examining Political Violence: Studies of Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Internal War*, edited by David Lowe, Austin T. Turk, and Dilip K. Da. United Kingdom: CRC Press, 2013.

Hudson, Hoyt H. “The Field of Rhetoric.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 9, no. 2 (1923): 167–180.

Huysmans, Jef. “Minding Exceptions: The Politics of Insecurity and Liberal Democracy.” *Contemporary Political Theory* 3, no. 3 (2004): 321–341.

Isin, Engin F. “The Neurotic Citizen.” *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004): 217–235.

Izard, Carroll E. “Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2, no. 3 (2007): 260–280.

Jackson, Richard. “Constructing Enemies: ‘Islamic Terrorism’ in Political and Academic Discourse.” *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 394–426.

Jenkins, Brian Michael. “The New Age of Terrorism.” *Terrorism and Political Islam* (2006): 117–130.

Jervis, Robert. “Understanding the Bush Doctrine.” *Political Science Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (2003): 365–388.

Jones, Bryan D., and Frank R. Baumgartner. *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Kaufmann, Chaim. “Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War.” *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 5–48.

Keane, John. “Fear and Democracy.” In *Violence and Politics: Globalization’s Paradox*, edited by Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar, 226–244. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Kellner, Douglas. “Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the “War on Terror.”“ *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2007): 622–645.

Kettl, Donald F. *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013.

Kezar, Adrianna, and Peter Eckel. “Advancing Diversity Agendas on Campus: Examining Transactional and Transformational Presidential Leadership Styles.” *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 11, no. 4 (2008): 379–405.

King, Andrew, and Floyd Anderson. “Nixon, Agnew and the ‘Silent Majority’: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization.” *Western Speech* 35 (1971): 243–255. In Monica C. Brasted. “MoveOn: The Rhetoric of Polarization.” Communication Faculty Publications, no. 2 (2012). http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cmc facpub/2?utm source=digitalcommons.brockport.edu%2Fcmc_facpub%2F2&utm _medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

Kofsky, Frank. *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995.

Konty, Mark, Blythe Duell, and Jeff Joireman. “Scared Selfish: A Culture of Fear’s Values in the Age of Terrorism.” *The American Sociologist* 35, no. 2 (2004): 93–109.

Krebs, Ronald R., and Chaim Kaufmann. “Selling the Market Short? The Marketplace of Ideas and the Iraq War.” *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 196–207.

Krebs, Ronald R., and Jennifer K. Lobasz. “Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq.” *Security Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 409–451.

Krebs, Ronald R., and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. “Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric.” *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 35–66.

Lee, Wei-Na, Ji-Young Hong, and Se-Jin Lee. “Communicating with American Consumers in the Post 9/11 Climate: An Empirical Investigation of Consumer Ethnocentrism in the United States.” *International Journal of Advertising* 22, no. 4 (2003): 487–510.

Lerner, Jennifer S., and Dacher Keltner. “Fear, Anger, and Risk.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 1 (2001): 146–159.

Lerner, Jennifer S., Roxana M. Gonzalez, Deborah A. Small, and Baruch Fischhoff. “Effects of Fear and Anger on Perceived Risks of Terrorism: A National Field Experiment.” *Psychological Science* 14, no. 2 (March 2003): 144–150.

Lett, Meridith Diane, Andrea Lynn DiPietro, and Danette Ifert Johnson. “Examining Effects of Television News Violence on College Students Through Cultivation Theory.” *Communication Research Reports* 21, no. 1 (2004): 39–46.

Lewis, Ted G. *Critical Infrastructure Protection in Homeland Security: Defending a Networked Nation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006.

Majone, Giandomenico. *Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

Martin, Denis-Constant. "The Choices of Identity." *Social Identities* 1, no. 1 (1995): 5–20.

Massumi, Brian. "Fear (the Spectrum Said)." *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 13, no. 1 (2005): 31–48.

McCauley, Clark. "Psychological Issues in Understanding Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism." In *Psychology of Terrorism*, edited by Bruce Bongar, Lisa M. Brown, Larry E. Beutler, James N. Breckenridge, and Philip G. Zimbardo, 101–115. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

McDermott, Rose, and Philip G. Zimbardo. "The Psychological Consequences of Terrorist Alerts." *Psychology of Terrorism* (2007): 357–370.

Melissen, Jan. *The New Public Diplomacy Soft Power in International Relations*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Moghaddam, Fathali M. *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008.

———. "*Interobjectivity: The Collective Roots of Individual Consciousness and Social Identity*." In *Individuality and the Group: Advances in Social Identity*, edited by Tom Postmes and Jolanda Jetten. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2006.

———. *Multiculturalism, Democracy, and Intergroup Relations: International and National Contexts*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008.

Moghaddam, Fathali M., and Rom Harré. *Words of Conflict, Words of War: How the Language We Use in Political Processes Sparks Fighting*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2010.

Mueller, John. "Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration." *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 2 (2005): 208–234.

Mueller, John E. *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006.

Mueller, John, and Mark G. Stewart. *Terror, Security, and Money: Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Murphy, John M. "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2003): 607–632.

Myers, David G. "Do We Fear the Right Things." *APS Observer* 14, no. 3 (2001): 31.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.

National Science and Technology Council Subcommittee on Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences. *Combating Terrorism: Research Priorities in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences*. Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, National Science and Technology Council, 2005.

Newman, Graeme R., and Ronald V. Clarke. *Policing Terrorism: An Executive's Guide*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. 2008.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. "The Benefits of Soft Power." *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge* 2 (2004): 3.

Obama, Barack. "Our Moment is Now." Speech, Des Moines, IA, December 27, 2007. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=77026.

OED Online. "Socialization." December 2013. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183747?redirectedFrom=socialization.

Pain, Rachel. "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics." *Progress in Human Geography* 33, no. 4 (2009): 466–486.

Pain, Rachel, and Susan J. Smith. *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Powell, Colin. "Address to the United Nations Security Council." Speech, New York, NY, February 5, 2003.

Presidential Campaign Commercials. "The Living Room Candidate." Accessed May 25, 2013. http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials.

Prewitt, Kenneth, Eric Alterman, Andrew Arato, Tom Pyszczynski, Corey Robin, and Jessica Stern. "The Politics of Fear after 9/11." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 1129–1146.

Proulx, Vincent-Joel. "Rethinking the Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the Post-September 11th Era: Should Acts of Terrorism Qualify as Crimes against Humanity." *Am. U. Int'l L. Rev.* 19 (2003): 1009–1089.

Pyszczynski, Tom. “What Are We So Afraid Of? A Terror Management Theory Perspective on the Politics of Fear.” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 827–848.

Raum, Richard D., and James S. Measell. “Wallace and His Ways: A Study of the Rehtorical Genre of Polarization.” *Communication Studies* 25, no. 1 (1974): 28–35.

Rice, Condoleezza. Interview by Wolf Blitzer. *CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*, September 8, 2002.

Robin, Corey. *Fear: The History of a Political Idea.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Roe, Paul. “Actor, Audience (s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK’s Decision to Invade Iraq.” *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 6 (2008): 615–635.

Rothe, Dawn, and Stephen L. Muzzatti. “Enemies Everywhere: Terrorism, Moral Panic, and U.S. Civil Society.” *Critical Criminology* 12, no. 3 (2004): 327–350.

Sadler, Melody S., Megan Lineberger, Joshua Correll, and Bernadette Park. “Emotions, Attributions, and Policy Endorsement in Response to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks.” *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 3 (2005): 249–258.

Scheufele, Dietram A. “Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication.” *Mass Communication & Society* 3, no. 2–3 (2000): 297–316.

Schiappa, Edward. *Constructing Reality through Definitions: The Politics of Meaning*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999.

Schildkraut, Deborah J. “The More Things Change...American Identity and Mass and Elite Responses to 9/11.” *Political Psychology* 23, no. 3 (2002): 511–535.

Schwandt, Thomas A. *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications, 2001.

Scott, Robert L. “On Not Defining ‘Rhetoric.’” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (1973): 81–96.

Searle, John R. *The Construction of Social Reality*. San Jose, CA: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

Shanahan, James, and Michael Morgan. “Adolescents, Families and Television in Five Countries: Implications for Cross-Cultural Educational Research.” *Journal of Educational Television* 18, no. 1 (1992): 1. In Meridith Diane Lett, Andrea Lynn DiPietro, and Danette Ifert Johnson. “Examining Effects of Television News Violence on College Students Through Cultivation Theory.” *Communication Research Reports* 21, no. 1 (2004): 39–46.

Shapiro, Michael A., and Annie Lang. “Making Television Reality Unconscious Processes in the Construction of Social Reality.” *Communication Research* 18, no. 5 (1991): 685–705.

Shora, Kareem, “National Security Entry Exit Registration System (NSEERS).” *Cardozo Public Law Policy, and Ethics Journal* 2, no. 1 (2003): 73–74.

Slocum-Bradley, Nikki. “The Positioning Diamond: A Trans-Disciplinary Framework for Discourse Analysis.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 40, no. 1 (2010): 79–107.

Slovic, Paul. *The Perception of Risk*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Solove, Daniel J. “Reconstructing Electronic Surveillance Law.” *Geo. Wash. L. Rev.* 72 (2003): 1701–1747.

Steinert, Heinz. “The Indispensable Metaphor of War: On Populist Politics and the Contradictions of the State’s Monopoly of Force.” *Theoretical Criminology* 7, no. 3 (2003): 265–291.

Stone, Geoffrey R. *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2004.

Sunstein, Cass R. “Fear and Liberty.” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2004): 967–996.

———. *Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

———. “Terrorism and Probability Neglect.” *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 26, no. 2–3 (2003): 121–136.

Tajfel, Henri, ed. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

———. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, vol. 7. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Thrall, Trevor A., and Jane K. Cramer, ed. *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2009.

Tuch, Hans N. *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Tuman, Joseph S. *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009.

Turner, John C. "Toward a Cognitive Redefinition." In *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* edited by Henri Tajfel, vol. 7. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

United Nations. "Charter of The United Nations: Statute of the International Court of Justice Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression. Article 51." Accessed November 26, 2014. http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml.

Van Dijk, Teun A. "Discourse and Manipulation." *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 3 (2006): 359–383.

Vermeule, Adrian. "Libertarian Panics." 36 *Rutgers LJ* 871 (2004).

Walt, Stephen M. "Beyond bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy." *International Security* 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001/2002): 56–78.

Whitehead, John W., and Steven H. Aden. "Forfeiting Enduring Freedom for Homeland Security: A Constitutional Analysis of the USA Patriot Act and the Justice Department's Anti-Terrorism Initiatives." *Am. UL Rev.* 51 (2001): 1083–1099.

Windt, Theodore Otto. "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Field of Study." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (1986): 102–116.

Wodak, Ruth, and Rudolf De Cillia. "Commemorating the Past: The Discursive Construction of Official Narratives about theRebirth of the Second Austrian Republic." *Discourse & Communication* 1, no. 3 (2007): 315–341.

Wolfe, Alan. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus*. Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 1984.

Wong, Kam C. "The Making of the USA Patriot Act I: The Legislative Process and Dynamics." *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 34, no. 3 (2006): 179–219.

Zarefsky, David. "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 607–619.

Zeckhauser, Richard, and Cass R. Sunstein. “Dreadful Possibilities, Neglected Probabilities.” In *The Irrational Economist: Making Decisions in a Dangerous World*, edited by Erwann Michel-Kerjan and Paul Sloviv, 116–123. New York, NY: Public Affairs Books, 2010.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
   Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2. Dudley Knox Library
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California